





## PREFACE

THE teaching of history has in recent years undergone considerable changes, mainly in the direction of humanizing the treatment of the subject. That such changes were desirable was emphasized in the official Report (1932) on the School Certificate Examination. The authors' aim has been to meet this new outlook and these changed conditions. They have collaborated to produce a History of Britain which, while fully covering the various School Certificate and Matriculation syllabuses, gives in the normal course of the narrative prominent attention to the cultural, social, and economic aspects of History.

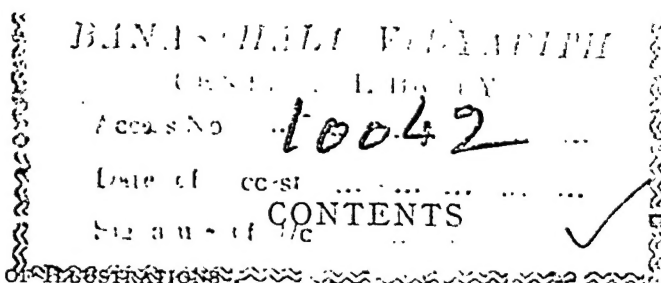
From the first to the last chapter the book has been subjected to close scrutiny by a number of expert critics; and it will be found to embody (as far as is practicable in a book of this kind) the results of the latest researches—results which usually take many years to find their way into books intended primarily for schools.

Due emphasis has been laid on the Geography of History, and the book is furnished with numerous maps. The illustrations have been very carefully selected for their interest in themselves and for their value in supplementing the narrative. Date Summaries, for those who find them an aid to the memory, have been given at frequent intervals; and Outline Summaries of the landmarks in British and relevant World History are also included in each volume. Local history as an illustration of the national story has received due consideration; and the reader will find references in the Index to nearly all the counties and principal towns of England and Wales. Finally the story of the development of the British Empire, which is bound up with the history of Britain itself, has been given the prominence which its importance demands.

The authors wish to express their thanks to Dr. J. A. Williamson, who has read the whole book in proof and whose help and criticism have been most valuable, and to Mr. G. H. Ely, Mr. L. H. Robinson, and Mr. Raymond B. Atcock, who have also read and criticized considerable portions of the book. Certain

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B.C. 55-4 Caesar's expeditions	B.C. 30-14 A.D. Augustus, First Roman Emperor
A.D. 43 Roman conquest begins	A.D. 47-56 St. Paul's Missionary Journeys
121 Hadrian's visit	306-37 Constantine, First Christian Emperor
410-50 Britain cut off from Rome	410 Sack of Rome by Goths

### SAXON PERIOD (c. 450-1066)

c. 450-500 Anglo-Saxon invasions	476 Last Roman Emperor of the West
597 St. Augustine lands	590-604 Pope Gregory the Great
	632 Mahomet <i>d.</i>
871-900 Alfred the Great	800 Charlemagne, Emperor
1016-35 Canute (Dane) King	962 Otto, Holy Roman Emperor
1042-66 Edward the Confessor	

### EARLY MEDIEVAL PERIOD (1066-1272)

1066-87 William the Conqueror	1073-85 Gregory VII, Pope
1085 <i>Domesday Book</i>	1076 Turks take Jerusalem
1154-89 Henry II	1096 First Crusade
1170 Murder of Becket	1189 Third Crusade (Richard I)
1199-1216 John	1226 St. Francis <i>d.</i>
1215 <i>Magna Carta</i>	
1265 Simon de Montfort's Parliament	

### LATE MEDIEVAL PERIOD (1272-1485)

1272-1307 Edward I	
1284 Conquest of Wales	
1292 John Balliol, King of Scots	
1314 ✕ Bannockburn	1338 Hundred Years War begins
	1346 ✕ Crécy
1348-9 Black Death	1415 ✕ Agincourt
1381 Peasants' Revolt	1453 End of Hundred Years War
	Turks take Constantinople
1455 Wars of Roses begin	
1485 ✕ Bosworth	

## OUTLINE SUMMARY

## TUDOR PERIOD (1485-1603)

- |                                       |                               |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1485 Henry VII <i>acc.</i>            | 1492 Columbus (America)       |
|                                       | 1498 Vasco da Gama (India)    |
| 1509-47 Henry VIII                    | 1517 Luther's Theses          |
| 1515 Wolsey Chancellor                | 1519-56 Emperor Charles V     |
| 1529-36 Reformation Parliament        | 1534 Cartier (Canada)         |
| 1536-40 Dissolution of Monasteries    | 1541 Calvin at Geneva         |
| 1549 First Prayer Book (Edward VI)    |                               |
| 1554 Mary I marries Philip of Spain   | 1562 Hawkins—Slave Trade      |
| 1558-1603 Elizabeth                   | 1577-80 Drake round the world |
| 1559 Acts of Supremacy and Uniformity | 1583 Gilbert (Newfoundland)   |
|                                       | .                             |
| 1587 Mary Queen of Scots executed     | 1600 East India Company       |
| 1588 Spanish Armada                   |                               |
| 1601 Poor Law Code                    |                               |
| .                                     |                               |

## EARLY STUART PERIOD (1603-60)

- |   |                              |
|---|------------------------------|
| 1603 James VI (Scotland)—James I (England)  |                              |
| 1605 Gunpowder Plot                         |                              |
| 1616 Shakespeare <i>d.</i>                  | 1607 Virginia founded        |
| 1625-9 First Three Parliaments of Charles I | 1620 Pilgrim Fathers         |
| 1629-40 Personal Government of Charles I    |                              |
| 1642-9 Civil War                            | 1643-1715 Louis XIV (France) |
| 1649-53 Commonwealth                        | 1652-4 First Dutch War       |
| 1653-8 Oliver Cromwell Protector            | 1655 English take Jamaica    |
| 1660 Restoration of Charles II              |                              |

## LATER STUART PERIOD (1660-1714)

- |                                    |                                   |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1660-85 Charles II                 |                                   |
| 1665-6 Plague and Fire of London   | 1664 English take New York        |
| 1678-80 Popish Plot                |                                   |
| 1685 Monmouth's Rebellion          |                                   |
| 1688 The Revolution                |                                   |
| 1689 William and Mary <i>acc.</i>  |                                   |
| 1702-14 Anne                       | 1702-13 War of Spanish Succession |
|                                    | 1704 <del>at</del> Blenheim       |
|                                    | English take Gibraltar            |
| 1707 Union of England and Scotland | 1713 Treaty of Utrecht            |

## OUTLINE SUMMARY

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### GEORGIAN PERIOD (1714-83)

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <p>1714 George I <i>acc.</i><br/>         1715 Jacobite Rebellion<br/>         1721-42 Walpole Ministry<br/>         1739 First Methodist Society</p> <p>1745 Jacobite Rebellion</p> <p>1757-61 Pitt's Ministry<br/>         1760-1820 George III<br/>         1765 Stamp Act<br/>         1769 Watt's Steam Engine<br/>         1770-82 North's Ministry</p> | <p>1740-86 Frederick the Great (Prussia)<br/>         1740-8 War of Austrian Succession<br/>         1751 Siege of Arcot (Clive)<br/>         1756-63 Seven Years War<br/>         1763 Treaty of Paris—Canada British</p> <p>1768-79 Cook's Pacific Voyages<br/>         1775-83 American War of Independence<br/>         1776 Declaration of Independence<br/>         1783 Treaty of Versailles</p> |
|---|---|

### REVOLUTIONARY ERA (1783-1837)

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <p>1783-1801 Younger Pitt's Ministry</p> <p>1800 Union of Great Britain and Ireland</p> <p>1807 British Slave Trade ended</p> <p>1819 Peterloo</p> <p>1825 Stockton and Darlington Railway<br/>         1829 Metropolitan Police Force</p> <p>1832 Great Reform Act<br/>         1833 Slavery ended (British Empire)<br/>         1834 Poor Law</p> | <p>1788 New South Wales<br/>         1789-97 Washington, President, U.S.A.<br/>         1789 French Revolution<br/>         1792-1815 Wars of French Revolution<br/>         1798 ∞ The Nile</p> <p>1804-14 Napoleon Emperor<br/>         1805 ∞ Trafalgar<br/>               ∞ Austerlitz</p> <p>1808-14 Peninsular War<br/>         1815 ∞ Waterloo<br/>               Congress of Vienna<br/>         1815-24 Congress System<br/>         1823 Monroe Doctrine</p> <p>1830 Belgian Revolution</p> |
|---|---|

### EARLY VICTORIAN PERIOD (1837-65)

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <p>1837 Victoria <i>acc.</i><br/>         1840 Penny Postage<br/>         1846 Repeal of Corn Laws</p> <p>1852 Duke of Wellington <i>d.</i></p> <p>1855-65 Palmerston's Supremacy</p> <p>1859 Darwin's <i>Origin of Species</i></p> | <p>1839 Durham Report (Canada)</p> <p>1848 Revolutions in France, Germany,<br/>               Austria, and Italy<br/>         1852-70 Napoleon III (France)<br/>         1854-6 Crimean War</p> <p>1857 Indian Mutiny<br/>         1859-60 Italian Unity<br/>         1861-5 American Civil War</p> |
|---|---|

## LATE VICTORIAN PERIOD (1865-1901)

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1867 Second Reform Act                        | 1867 Dominion of Canada                        |
| 1868-74 Gladstone's First Ministry            |  |
| 1870 Education Act                            | 1870-1 Franco-Prussian War                     |
| 1874-80 Disraeli Ministry                     | 1875 Suez Canal shares bought                  |
|   | 1877 Victoria Empress of India                 |
|   | 1878 Treaty of Berlin                          |
|   | 1882 Triple Alliance (Germany, Austria, Italy) |
| 1884 Third Reform Act                         | 1885 Gordon killed<br>First Motor-car          |
| 1886 Home Rule Bill                           |  |
|   | 1889 Rhodesia                                  |
| 1894 Gladstone retires                        |  |
| 1895-1903 Joseph Chamberlain<br>Colonial Sec. | 1895 Jameson Raid                              |
| 1897 Victoria's Diamond Jubilee               |  |
|   | 1899-1902 Boer War                             |
| 1901 Victoria <i>d.</i>                       | 1901 Commonwealth of Australia                 |

## WORLD REVOLUTION (1901-37)

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1901-10 Edward VII                     | 1903 First Aeroplane                              |
| 1902-5 Balfour Ministry                | 1904 Anglo-French Entente                         |
| 1908-16 Asquith Ministries             |   |
| 1910-36 George V                       | 1910 Union of S. Africa                           |
| 1911 Parliament Act                    |   |
| National Health Insurance              |   |
|  | 1914 Outbreak of Great War<br>✕ The Marne         |
| 1916-22 Lloyd George Ministry          | 1915 Gallipoli                                    |
|  | 1916 ✕ The Somme                                  |
|  | 1917 America enters the War<br>Russian Revolution |
| 1918 Women Suffrage                    | 1918 Armistice                                    |
| 1921 Irish Free State                  | 1919 Treaty of Versailles<br>League of Nations    |
|  | 1922 Fascist Revolution (Italy)                   |
| 1924 First Labour Government           |   |
| 193 National Government                | 1933 Nazi Revolution (Germany)                    |
|  | 1935 India Act                                    |
| 1936 Edward VIII-George VI <i>acc.</i> | 1936- Spanish Civil War                           |

INTRODUCTION  
THE DAWN OF HISTORY

BRITAIN is an island, whose inhabitants have long felt secure behind the barrier of the sea. Until the invention of the aeroplane—which has gone far to destroy this feeling of security—the insularity of Britain has been the governing fact in our history. It is true that our coasts have often been attacked—that the French have often raided the Channel towns, and that the Dutch once sailed up the Medway. Even our kings sometimes came from across the sea as usurpers or invaders—witness the successful landings of Henry Bolingbroke, Henry Tudor, and William of Orange. But not since 1066 has any foreign host conquered the country. 'Spaniards and Dutchmen, and Frenchmen and such men' have all tried, and failed, to invade England. Philip of Spain with his army waiting in the Netherlands, Tromp and his Dutch fleet, Napoleon watching from the cliffs at Boulogne, the Germans with their submarine campaign—none of these have succeeded in breaking down the defences of the island.

But our earlier history tells a very different story. The invasions of the Romans, Saxons, Danes, and Normans, from the first century to the eleventh, show that there was a time when Britain could be invaded with comparative ease. The highlands of Britain all lie to the north and west of the island: there stand the Welsh mountains, the Pennines, and the mountains of Scotland. But towards the continent of Europe project the two comparatively flat coasts of England—her long eastern shore facing the Low Countries, Germany, and Scandinavia; and the Channel coast, facing France. Before England was united under one ruler, or her coasts protected by an adequate fleet, the invasion of the south-eastern lowlands was a simple matter: the whole country, from the Humber to Southampton Water, lay open and easily accessible through navigable rivers. It was across the North Sea or the English Channel that the invaders already mentioned—Romans, Saxons, Danes, and Normans—launched their attacks.

There is, however, another route from the Continent to Britain which presents itself to ships sailing from the Mediterranean or from Spain. Coming from the south, traders or invaders first sighted Cornwall. They then either sailed up the English Channel until they found a good place for landing or they rounded Land's End into the Bristol Channel and the Irish Sea, whence, sailing round Scotland, they could find a passage to Scandinavia. Invaders using this route and landing on the Cornish or Welsh coasts would be confronted with a difficult and hilly country; but the mouth of the Bristol Channel, leading to rivers like the Bristol Avon, the Severn and the Warwickshire Avon, opens the way to the heart of England. There is reason to believe that some, at any rate, of our invaders in pre-historic times used this Atlantic route.

Very little is known of the earliest inhabitants of this country. In Paleolithic times, Man was a hunter; he clothed himself in skins, had rough stone weapons, and obtained what shelter he could in natural caves. He knew nothing of building or of agriculture. In Britain, in this remote period, the south-eastern lowlands were largely covered with forest and fen. Many ferocious animals were then common; indeed, the wolf, brown bear, wild cat, reindeer, and wild boar survived into historic times.

With the beginning of the Neolithic period<sup>1</sup> (c. 3000 B.C.) our knowledge greatly increases; from this era we may date the first signs of European civilization. This civilization gradually penetrated into Britain by the western or Atlantic route mentioned above. The building of megalithic (= large stone) monuments—dolmens and long barrows—is a characteristic of this age.

During the thousand years or so of the Neolithic penetration of Britain, many useful arts were introduced into the country from Europe. It was then that the common domestic animals, the horse, cow, sheep, goat, and dog, were tamed and used. It was then, too, that the first beginnings of agriculture were made, and so Man developed from a mere hunter into a

<sup>1</sup> So called from the change to polished stone implements (Paleolithic, i.e. Old Stone; Neolithic, i.e. New Stone).

shepherd or farmer. Flint-mining was a flourishing industry, and the making of simple vessels of pottery (of which many have been dug up in Neolithic graves) became usual. These profound changes covered many centuries. By the end of the Neolithic period the inhabitants of Britain were no mere savages, but people with a knowledge of building in wood and stone, having some idea of agriculture, and living in settled communities.

Towards the end of the Neolithic period (*c.* 2000 B.C.) there was an invasion, from across the North Sea, of a people known to archaeologists as the Beaker Folk—so called from the shape of the characteristic pottery found in their graves. Their remains have been chiefly found on the east coasts of Scotland and England, and in the Salisbury Plain area. It is in the Beaker period that bronze weapons first begin to appear in small quantities, and after this the Bronze Age proper begins (*c.* 2000–500 B.C.) There was a rich early Bronze Age culture in Britain, and to this period probably belong the great stone circles at Stonehenge and Avebury. Of these two, Avebury, though not so well known as its neighbour, is by far the larger; the Avebury temple (the remains of which may still be seen surrounding the village) must once have been an imposing structure, probably the centre of an important civilization.

In Britain there are a number of stone circles, chiefly Bronze Age, on or near our western coasts—in Devon and Cornwall, the Salisbury Plain area (easily reached by invaders via the Bristol Channel and the Mendips), Pembrokeshire, Anglesey and Carnarvon, the Western Highlands and the Hebrides. Britain possesses more stone circles<sup>1</sup> than any other European country, though there are many megalithic monuments all over western Europe, from Spain to Scandinavia.

The Early Iron Age (beginning in Britain about 500 B.C.) shows evidence of several different types of culture brought from Europe; it ended in the Celtic invasions described in the next chapter. During this age, the custom of building hill-forts (begun during the Neolithic period) was common; and

<sup>1</sup> The Ring of Brogar, in the Orkneys, measures 342 feet in diameter. The circle at Little Salkeld in Cumberland, known as 'Long Meg and Her Daughters', measures 330 feet.

the excavations at Maiden Castle (near Dorchester) and elsewhere show the size and strength of these defences. Remains of hill-forts of the Iron Age (see illustration opposite) may still be found in many parts of England, e.g. along the western escarpment of the Cotswolds, and on the hills of Wiltshire and Somerset.

From the above brief sketch it will be seen that the pre-historic settlers in Britain were many and various, and that each successive wave brought from Europe some contribution to our island culture. Only the careful excavation of ancient burial-places and hill-forts has enabled the archaeologist to trace the outlines of the long pre-historic age.

Though certain remains are more usually found on or near the coast (e.g. the megaliths near the Atlantic coast, the 'beakers' near the east coast), there was one part of the island where for many centuries dwelt the most numerous and most advanced portion of the inhabitants. From the Neolithic to the Early Iron Age, the chalk hills of southern England were thickly populated in comparison with the rest of the island. The reason for this is not far to seek. Chalk is not a favourable soil for forest trees, except the beech, which has not a thick undergrowth; the presence of wild beasts was therefore not so much to be feared as in the widespread forests of the Midlands. On the other hand, chalk is a favourable soil for grass and therefore for cattle and sheep. The centre of the chalk formation of England is Salisbury Plain, whence long ranges of chalk hills branch out. This helps to explain the fact that Wiltshire is the richest county in England in both Neolithic and Bronze Age remains, and that Avebury and Stonehenge are both in this neighbourhood.

Many ancient trackways, once trodden by stone and bronze users, still radiate from Avebury, just as modern roads radiate from Salisbury. These trackways are very interesting to follow; one, running from Wiltshire to Kent, became the Pilgrims' Way of medieval times. The best known runs right across England from Norfolk to Dorset. It is called the Icknield Way. It takes the line of the Chiltern Hills and crosses the Thames just above Goring; thence it can be followed for many miles across the Berkshire and Wiltshire Downs. To



the traveller in that lonely country, to-day one of the most deserted parts of England, the memorials of a distant past speak of men of whom all trace has vanished save this ancient trackway and the graves of forgotten chieftains buried in the hillside.



Air view of a Wessex hill-fort: Badbury Camp, Dorsetshire, about 3 miles from Wimborne. The hill, with its clump of firs, is a landmark for miles. The defences consist, as can be seen in the photograph, of three lines of ramparts.

# I

## THE ANCIENT WORLD AND BRITAIN

### I. *Britain and the Mediterranean*

CENTURIES before the Christian era—during the late Bronze and early Iron Age—the Celts began (perhaps about 600 B.C.) to cross from the Continent to invade our island, which takes its oldest name from one branch of them, the Britons. These warlike invaders belonged to the same race as the Gauls who had settled in France and North Italy, and who had sacked Rome itself. The old British tongue, which was the same as that of the ancient Gauls, was the language out of which developed modern Welsh, and Cornish (which survived until the eighteenth century).<sup>1</sup>

The Celts were conquerors. But there were probably other more peaceful visitors to Britain during the Celtic period. From very early times the Phoenicians traded direct with Brittany and possibly also with Britain. They were for long the principal traders of the Mediterranean and were the founders of Tyre, Sidon, and Carthage. Their chief trade rivals were the Greeks, who thrust the Phoenicians out of many of their ancient markets and established colonies all along the Mediterranean coasts from the Black Sea to Spain.

In Gaul the main Greek settlement was at Massilia—the modern Marseilles. From there a certain Greek named Pytheas set out on a voyage of exploration (c. 330 B.C.). His preparations were made with great secrecy on account of the jealousy of the Phoenicians, for he intended among other things to discover the whereabouts of their famous tin-islands. He first landed in Cornwall and talked to the natives. He learnt

<sup>1</sup> It is probable that the Celtic invaders imposed their languages on the former folk of these islands. But it is not true to describe the Irish, Welsh, and Cornish as of Celtic descent: rather are they the descendants of the earlier inhabitants whom the Celts conquered. The Celts were a tall, fair-haired, big-boned people, and it would be more correct to attribute the short, dark types of the Irish, the Cornish, and the Scottish Highlanders to Neolithic or to Bronze Age stock.

that the tin was sent by ship to the mouth of the Loire, thence across Gaul to the Mediterranean ports. Leaving Cornwall, Pytheas circumnavigated the island. He landed in the extreme north of Scotland, and even in the Shetland Islands. He remarked upon the gloomy climate, and on the drink made from grain fermented with honey—a kind of beer, or mead, long popular in Britain.

With Pytheas, then, Britain made her first contact with Greek civilization. After his time Britain was no longer a half-mythical country lost in northern fogs, but an island which found a definite if not an accurate place on Greek maps. Thus, about the time that Alexander the Great was revealing the East to the eager curiosity of the Greeks, Pytheas was introducing Britain to the civilized world. Little did the half-barbaric islanders realize what this meant. Nor could they foresee that Greek culture was to mean far more to mankind than anything else in the Ancient World—except the Christian religion, itself recorded in the Greek language—and that there would come a time when educated Englishmen would know far more about Ancient Greece than about Ancient Britain.

## 2. *Caesar's Expedition*

Nearly three centuries elapsed between the visits to Britain of Pytheas the Greek and of Julius Caesar the Roman. The power of Rome had grown up in the interval. Rome developed her career as one among many city-states. But partly owing to a series of fortunate accidents, partly to something in the Roman character, this one city imposed her rule, first on Italy, and then on all the countries of the Mediterranean. This was Rome's great achievement—to make one enduring state where formerly there were hundreds, and to impose her law and her peace upon almost the whole of the known civilized world.

The extension of Roman culture northwards from Italy and the Mediterranean was the work of Julius Caesar. It was he who created Roman Gaul, and it is to him that France owes the fact that she is to-day a Latin country.

Caesar's conquest of Gaul occupied eight years (58–50 B.C.), and the story is told in his *De Bello Gallico*. His determination

to visit Britain was the result of the close intercourse which existed between the Gallic and the British Celts. The existence of hostile tribes, of near kin to the newly-conquered Gauls, living in an island only twenty miles away, was a serious matter. Caesar therefore determined to go and see the island for himself.

His first expedition was undertaken with two legions.<sup>1</sup> He set sail with the infantry—seven or eight thousand men—from Portus Itius, probably somewhere near Calais, on the night of 26 August 55 B.C. Next morning he sighted the Kentish cliffs. Eventually he decided to land on a low shore, possibly near Deal. The Roman soldiers did not like the sight of the waves, nor of the British war chariots on shore, and they hesitated to leave the boats, until the standard-bearer of the Tenth Legion set the example with the famous words: ‘Desilite, milites, nisi vultis aquilam hostibus prodere: ego certe meum rei publicae atque imperatori officium praestitero.’<sup>2</sup> Once ashore, the Romans quickly routed the Britons, and Caesar built a camp. Then things began to go wrong. The cavalry failed to put in an appearance, having been driven back by a storm; and the storm did great damage to Caesar’s boats. For a time his situation was precarious, especially as the Britons had learnt of his plight. But he attacked them again, and again they fled; after which, enough ships having been repaired, he returned to Gaul.

For his second expedition, next year (54 B.C.), he took the much larger force of five legions. He landed again near the site of his first camp, but this time no enemy was to be seen. The Britons, Caesar discovered, had concentrated their main defence north of the Thames, under the leadership of a king called Cassivellaunus. The Trinovantes of Essex, who were enemies of Cassivellaunus, became Caesar’s allies, and their example was soon followed by other tribes. Shortly afterwards Cassivellaunus himself, whose capital Caesar had attacked, made his submission. Caesar, after demanding tribute, once

<sup>1</sup> A Roman legion consisted of about 5,000 men.

<sup>2</sup> ‘Come, leap ashore, soldiers, unless you would betray this eagle to the enemy: I at least will do my duty to the Republic and to my general.’ (*De Bello Gallico*, iv. 25.)

more re-crossed the Channel. He probably thought his expedition a failure, as it obviously was.

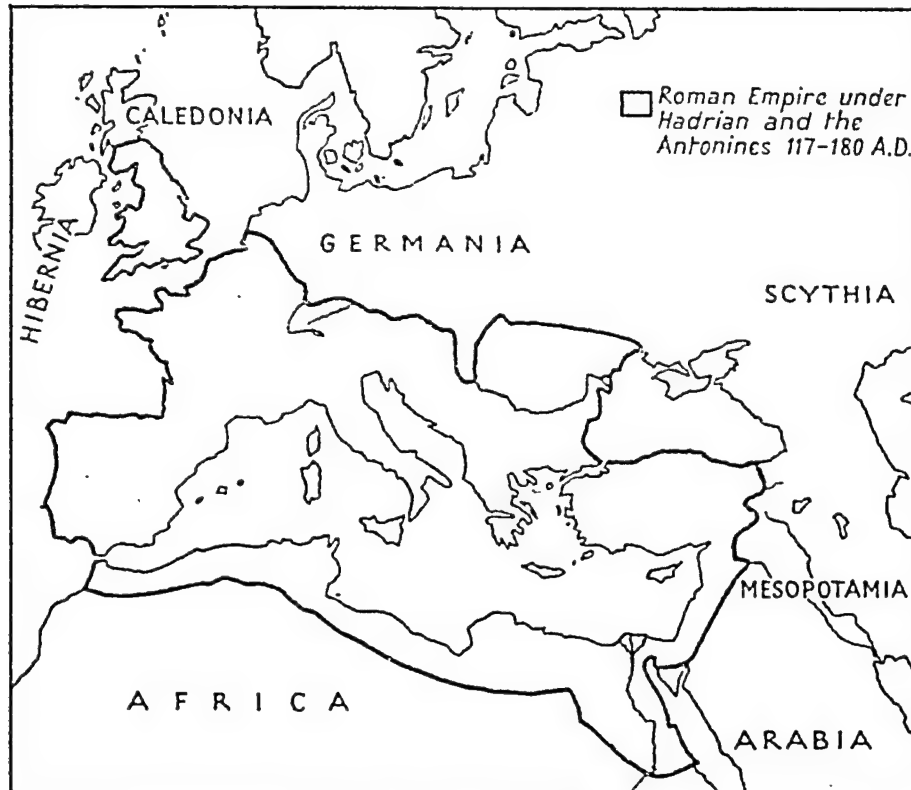
Julius Caesar was a careful observer, and he has left us an account of what he himself saw and what he heard about Britain. He saw for himself the houses and farms of Kent; and he was told of the tin and iron ore to be found elsewhere in the island. He noted that the British fighting men painted their bodies blue with a dye called woad. This reference has unfortunately led many to think of the pre-Roman Britons as mere savages who never wore anything but woad, and never did anything but fight. But it would be unfair to criticize any people by their behaviour in time of war. The Britons of this era were in some respects a civilized people. A study of their armour, their domestic utensils, and their jewellery all point to progress in the art of metal-working.

Their religion, which played a large part in their lives, was, however, disgraced by human sacrifice. The Druids whom Caesar saw in Gaul were similar to the British Druids. As in ancient Egypt, these priests were a caste apart, with a power so great that it rivalled that of the kings and war-chiefs. All knowledge, such as it was, was in their hands. They taught that the soul does not perish but passes at death from one body to another. They had the monopoly of justice. It was their practice to burn to death those who had offended against their laws, and to sacrifice human victims before the tribe went to war. They were famed for their magic arts, and held certain shrubs, like the mistletoe, to be sacred.

It was nearly a hundred years before another Roman army landed in Britain. Ten years after his last raid on Britain, Caesar was assassinated in Rome. A series of civil wars followed, which finally led to the establishment of the Roman Empire under Caesar's great-nephew, who took the name of Augustus (30 B.C.). In the reign of this first Roman Emperor, Christ was born in Judaea, then ruled by Herod the Great, an ally of Augustus. These two events—the establishment of the Roman Empire and the birth of Christ—make the reign of Augustus of unique importance in the world's annals.

To a modern European, one of the most surprising things about the Roman Empire is the smallness of its military forces.

To maintain order and to guard the frontiers, an army of between 250,000 and 350,000 men sufficed for an empire extending from Britain to the Sahara, and from the Atlantic to the Persian Gulf. When we consider the enormous armies at



THE ROMAN EMPIRE

present maintained by rival nations within these boundaries, we may think that we have lost something by substituting for such an empire a world of independent states. The countries of southern Europe and western Asia have never, during the whole course of their history, enjoyed as long a period of peace—*Pax Romana*—as that which Rome secured for them. Within the Roman Empire there was one law and one language—Latin. There were, of course, hundreds of other languages and local dialects, but Latin was the common tongue, the language of business, of culture, of command. The various peoples of the Empire, once they were absorbed, were admitted to the benefits of the Roman system. Rome was so obviously,

so vastly superior to the 'barbarian' world outside that the conquered Spaniard or Gaul soon forgot his former freedom.

Britain meanwhile was coming closer within the Roman orbit. Traders from Gaul maintained friendly relations with the islanders, and Roman officials penetrated to the courts of British kings. One of these kings was Cunobeline or Cymbeline, who is the subject of a play of Shakespeare. His capital was at Colchester, and a Roman historian described him as 'Brittanorum Rex'. There must have been many other British princes who thought, like Cymbeline's step-son:

There be many Caesars  
Ere such another Julius. Britain is  
A world by itself, and we will nothing pay  
For wearing our own noses.<sup>1</sup>

### 3. *The Roman Conquest of Britain*

Britain, 'a world by itself', was destined not only to pay tribute to Rome but to be conquered by her legions. The reasons which had led Caesar to consider the conquest of the island still held good; and the project was merely delayed, not abandoned. In the first century of the Christian era Britain was absorbed into the Roman Empire, of which it remained a part for three and a half centuries (43-410)—as long a period as from the time of Elizabeth to our own day.

In A.D. 43 the Emperor Claudius sent an army to conquer Britain. Its commander was Aulus Plautius; he had about 50,000 men: four legions (22,000 men) recruited from Roman citizens, and 28,000 auxiliaries raised from the more distant provinces.

Before this formidable host, the Britons of the south-east could put up but a feeble resistance. The Emperor Claudius arrived the same year, and it was under his personal command that the army crossed the Thames and occupied Colchester. Then the armies advanced westward. They were spread out fanwise from London in four or five lines of advance. The greater part of the lowlands was conquered. The new

<sup>1</sup> Shakespeare, *Cymbeline*, Act III, Scene i. Cymbeline reigned in Britain from c. A.D. 5 to A.D. 40.

commander, Ostorius Scapula, therefore made a temporary boundary (which afterwards became the Fosse Way) across the country from Lincoln to Exeter.

From the Fosse, the armies advanced to the line of the Severn, where they halted, probably at Gloucester and at Viroconium (Wroxeter). They reached the Dee about A.D. 50. The lowlands were now won, but the most difficult part of the task lay ahead. The conquest of Wales occupied about thirty years. It was here that a son of Cymbeline, named Caratacus,<sup>1</sup> who had escaped from Colchester, organized the desperate resistance of the Silures of south Wales. He was taken, fighting in wild country in central or north Wales, and brought a prisoner to Rome. His arrival was celebrated by a Roman triumph, in which the captive king was exhibited with his family. He told the Emperor that, had he not mismanaged his affairs, he might have entered Rome not as a captive but as an ally; his fearless demeanour induced the Emperor to spare his life. His remark to Claudius, when he saw the glories of Rome, is well known: 'You who possess all these things actually covet the huts of Britain!'

After the defeat of Caratacus, the Romans spent several years in the slow task of advancing through the Welsh valleys to the coast. Suetonius Paulinus went to Anglesey (A.D. 61), where he massacred a large number of Druids. He was still on the island when he heard terrible news. Far away in east Britain the Iceni, who were thought to be thoroughly subdued, had risen in revolt, on account of the Roman governor's cruel treatment of the natives and their queen, Boadicea (more properly, Boudicca). They had massacred the helpless citizens of Roman Colchester. On receiving this news, Suetonius Paulinus marched rapidly eastward. But he was unable to save Verulam (St. Albans) and London, which were given to the flames. Suetonius, however, routed the rebel army, and Boadicea, seeing that all was lost, heroically killed herself. The rebellion was put down with typical Roman mercilessness, and as many people were massacred as had perished in the three Roman towns.

<sup>1</sup> Not Caractacus, an old blunder. (Caratacus = Caradawg = Caradoc = Caretic = Cerdic.)



The next seventeen years were occupied in the conquest of Wales and in the invasion of the country of the Brigantes in north Britain, where Eburacum (York) was founded about this time (c. A.D. 75). Then the Emperor Vespasian sent Julius Agricola to Britain (A.D. 77). The new governor was one of the ablest Roman rulers and soldiers. His son-in-law, the historian Tacitus, gives a full description of the Agricolan war, and a glowing account of the general's virtues.

Agricola first completed the conquest of north Wales; then he turned his attention to the Brigantes of north England. In a year's campaign he advanced to the Solway Firth. Forts were built to hold down the country, and at least one road was constructed across the Pennines. Later, Agricola entered Scotland. He subdued the Lowlands, and built another line of forts between the Forth and the Clyde. Somewhere, probably in Perthshire, he won the battle of Mons Graupius (A.D. 84), and was about to undertake the conquest of the Highlands when he was recalled.

His work had been well done and had not been confined to military operations. He Romanized the Britons.

'In order that these . . . men living far apart, unskilled and eager for war, might, by a taste of luxury, become accustomed to peace and quiet, Agricola personally urged and publicly aided them to build temples, courts of justice, and dwelling-houses. Further, he provided a liberal education for the sons of the chiefs . . . so much so that they who lately disdained the Roman language were now eager for its literature. Hence, too, a liking sprang up for our style of dress, and the toga became fashionable. . . . Step by step they were led to things which dispose to vice—the lounge, the bath, the elegant banquet. All this, in their ignorance, they called civilization, which is but a part of their servitude.'

concluded Tacitus<sup>1</sup> with scorn.

To hold Scotland proved impossible. There was a serious northern rebellion at the beginning of the Emperor Hadrian's reign, and the Ninth Legion mysteriously disappears from history about this time. The Scottish Lowlands had already been given up. New forts were constructed, and a deep ditch, known as the Vallum, was dug across the country from

<sup>1</sup> Tacitus, *Agricola*, xxi.

Burgh-on-Sands to Newcastle, where a bridge (Pons Aelius) was built across the Tyne.<sup>1</sup>

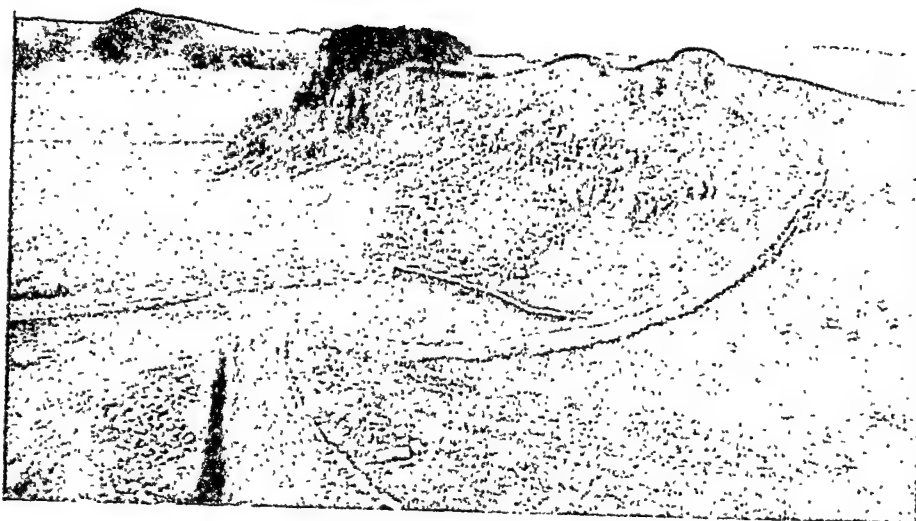
<sup>1's</sup> The visit of Hadrian (A.D. 121) was part of one of the great  
<sup>21</sup> tours of his Empire by which this restless monarch occupied much of his twenty years' reign. In Britain he planned the famous wall which bears his name, similar to the frontier walls he had already caused to be constructed on the Rhine and the Danube.

Hadrian's Wall commands the ridge of hills across Northumberland, and looks northwards. It was seventy-three miles long, and stretched from sea to sea. It joined up a line of seventeen forts. Along its whole length, at intervals of one Roman mile,<sup>2</sup> smaller forts or mile-castles were constructed, and between each mile-castle two turrets. The top of the Wall was paraded by sentries, whose permanent quarters were the mile-castles, while the main reserves of the army lived in the seventeen larger forts. The Wall was thus a long sentry line, and at the same time an obstacle against raiding parties. For a picture of Roman Britain a visit should be paid to  
<sup>1's</sup> Hadrian's Wall as it stands to-day. Once it was twenty feet  
<sup>all</sup> high; now it is, at the most, four or five feet. It is impressive even in its ruined state. The central portion, the twenty-five miles where it crosses the wild Northumberland moors, is the best place to follow it. There, across the wind-swept moor, one may walk all day without meeting a fellow man, with only the Wall and the curlews to keep one company. Here once the soldiers of the Empire kept their watch; here the busy forts were alive with men who kept guard over this far northern frontier of Imperial Rome.

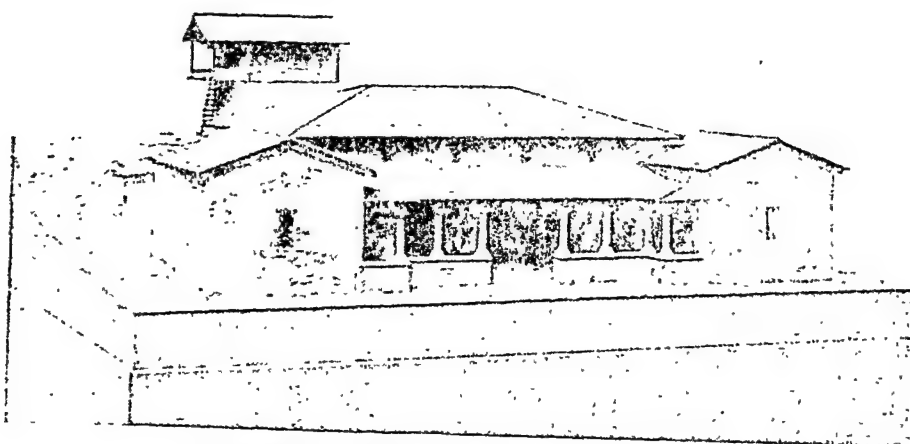
Hadrian's successor, Antoninus Pius, attempted to extend the limits of Roman Britain northwards. Like Hadrian, he

<sup>1</sup> Controversy rages over the question of the purpose and date of the Vallum; but it could not have been meant as a defensive line, as it was dug on the southern slope of the hills, i.e. looking towards England, not Scotland. Probably it was merely intended, like the Fosse in earlier times, to be a frontier mark. Some think that it was made by Trajan before Hadrian's accession, others that it was made simultaneously with the Wall. It can still be seen behind the Wall.

<sup>2</sup> A Roman 'mile', the Roman lineal measure of a thousand paces, was about 1,618 yards.



HADRIAN'S WALL



A ROMAN 'VILLA' OR COUNTRY HOUSE

A reconstructed model of the corridor type, common in Britain and the Continent, in which the main rooms open on to a passage or corridor, with a projecting wing at either end.

ordered a wall to be built, on a line formerly held by Agricola. The Antonine Wall (c. A.D. 140), which can still be traced, runs from the Firth of Forth to the Firth of Clyde, and was built of turf, not stone, with forts at intervals along its length. The attempt to hold the Scottish Lowlands was again not successful, and the Romans were subsequently forced to withdraw to Hadrian's Wall. The warlike Emperor Severus, vowing to exterminate the whole Caledonian race, pushed on into the Highlands, and even reached Aberdeen. But illness enforced his return, and he died at York (A.D. 211). Such was the end of the Roman attempt to conquer the Highlands.

Wall of  
Antoninus  
c. 140

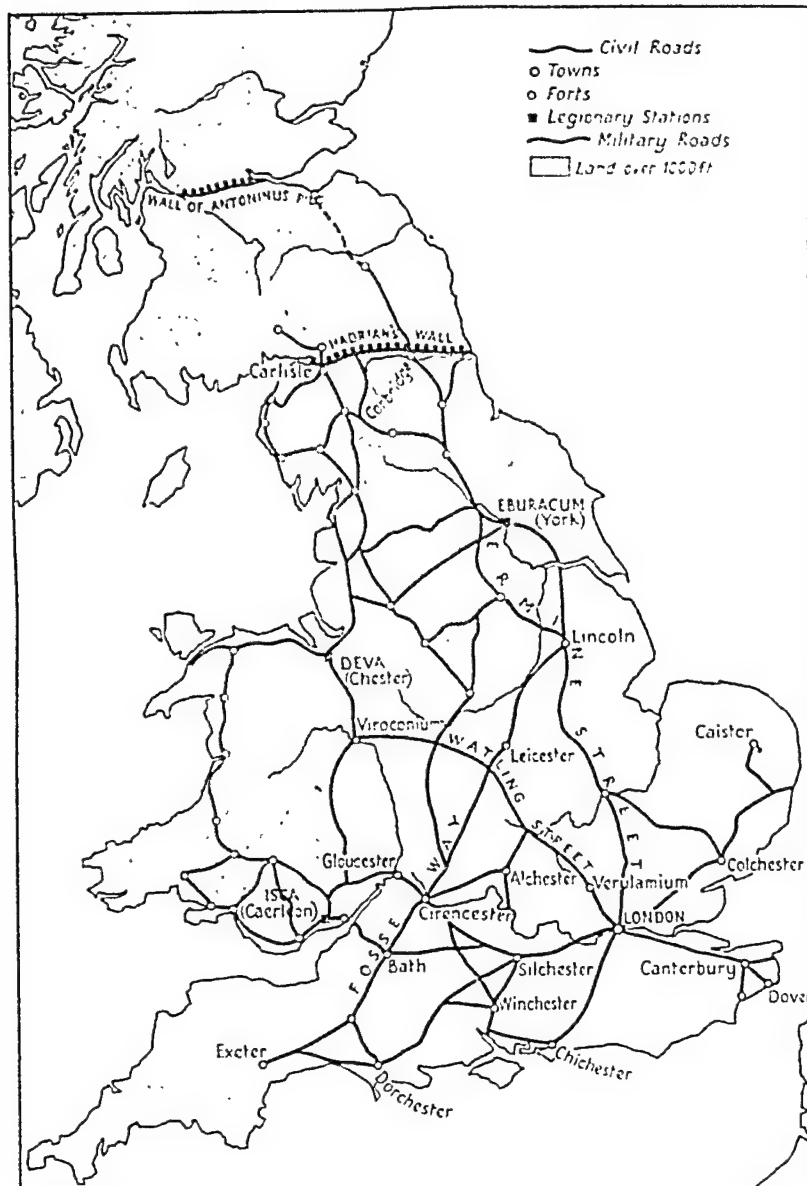
#### 4. *Life in Roman Britain*

Roman Britain was really two countries. A line drawn to connect the three legionary<sup>1</sup> towns of Eburacum (York), Deva (Chester), and Isca (Caerleon-on-Usk) would separate the civil and military parts of the province. South and east of this line was a country seldom burdened with military occupation, and never, until the last days of the Empire, troubled with the thought of war. This blessing it enjoyed for two hundred and fifty years. There is no equally long period of internal peace in our history, save the two centuries and a half from Charles II to the present day. It was far otherwise in the northern and western parts of the country: geography, which controls history, supplies the reason. Wales and north Britain are mountainous; they had been hard to conquer, and they were hard to hold. The wild hill tribes of these districts were never civilized by Rome, and there were few but military towns north of York, or west of Chester. The whole of these northern and western districts, with few towns and practically no villas, were held down by a network of military forts and roads, with the three legionary towns in the rear.

the three  
legionary  
towns

Among the most numerous of the Roman remains in Britain are the so-called Roman camps, which should more properly be termed forts or fortresses. The three large fortresses were the head-quarters of the three legions already mentioned—

<sup>1</sup> Of the four legions originally sent to subdue Britain, three were retained, while the fourth departed with Agricola.



# ROMAN BRITAIN

Based on Haverfield: *Roman Occupation of Britain* (O.U.P.)





A ROMAN FORTRESS

Hardknot Castle in Cumberland, as it may have appeared in Roman times. The small building below the fort is the bath. The mountain behind is Scafell.

York, Chester, and Caerleon-on-Usk. But there were numerous smaller forts occupied by the auxiliary troops who held the lines of defence between the legionary towns and the frontier, and these lay, as we should expect, chiefly in north Britain and in Wales.<sup>1</sup> The best preserved are found on Hadrian's Wall—e.g. Camboglanna (Birdoswald), Cilurnum (Chesters), and Borcovicium (Housesteads). The general plan of the fort was rectangular; there were four gates, from each of which a street ran straight to the centre of the fort; here at the centre stood the praetorium, the commander's headquarters, and near this were the commander's house and the store-houses; the remaining buildings consisted of barracks for the soldiers.

The south-east and the midlands, which had been easily conquered, were equally easily held. Here communication was convenient, towns were built, and Roman customs and law introduced. This part of the province was the true Roman Britain, and its inhabitants were thoroughly Romanized. It is a mistake to suppose that, when the Romans conquered a country, that country was held down by Italian officials. On the contrary, the provincials, except of course the slaves, could easily acquire the status of Roman citizen.<sup>2</sup> Those who dwelt in the towns, or in the farms and villas of the country, were certainly Celtic in blood; but they had become, by the end of the second century, thoroughly Roman in speech and habit—'Romano-Britons' in fact. The remains of mosaic pavements, painted wall-plaster, hypocausts (central heating) and baths all show the willingness of the British landowner to accept the ways of Rome.

Our knowledge of life in Roman Britain has been derived mainly from excavation. First the towns. London was by far the largest town, covering an area of over 300 acres, which made it one of the largest towns north of the Alps. It ex

<sup>1</sup> There were about 20 forts in Wales, 70 in the north of England (including those on Hadrian's Wall), and between 30 and 40 north of the Wall.

<sup>2</sup> But in earlier times the right of calling oneself a Roman citizen had been jealously guarded, and civil wars had been fought on this question.



tended from Ludgate Hill to where the Tower now stands and included roughly the area now known as the City; St. Paul's, the Guildhall, and the Bank of England stand on the site of Roman London. The Roman city lay all to the north of the river, and was approached from the south by a bridge, on the site of the present London Bridge. The city was surrounded by walls—built within half a century of Boadicea's revolt—and their foundations have been traced through almost their whole course. Visitors to St. Giles's churchyard, Cripplegate, can still see part of the actual Roman wall, and there is still a street called London Wall.

After London, the largest towns in Britain were Cirencester (Corinium), the chief town of the Cotswolds, and Verulamium (near St. Albans), where excavations have recently revealed a Roman city and also a pre-Roman city built by Cymbeline's father. Viroconium, on the Severn near the present village of Wroxeter, and Silchester (Callewa) are other buried towns which have yielded up treasures to the spade of the archaeologist. Lincoln still contains a Roman gateway, and so does Colchester. At Bath (Aquae Sulis) the Romans discovered the warm springs by which the town still lives. The baths themselves—which the Romans used not only as 'baths' but also as 'clubs'—were unearthed in modern times.

In the country, the chief Roman remains, apart from the roads, are the villas or country houses—and the world saw no such convenient, luxurious houses again till quite recent times. A fair number of villas have been excavated; one of the finest is at Chedworth in Gloucestershire. There one can see the plan of the buildings, the mosaics with which the floors were decorated, and the heating apparatus which warmed the rooms and heated the bath. In a Roman house, the bath itself was as large as a modern bathroom, for the Romans did not bathe in water but in steam; usually there were three rooms of different temperatures, and then a small cold-water bath. The heating apparatus was also used to send hot air into some of the rooms by means of pipes underneath the flooring and up the walls—a system of central heating known as the hypocaust.

Nearly all Roman villas had large farms attached to them, worked by slaves; for agriculture was the chief means of

Other  
Roman  
towns

Villas

Roman  
farming

subsistence. Like the manors of later times, the villas were self-contained; that is to say, they produced all the necessities of life by the labour of the people who lived there. Thus at Chedworth the dyeing vats can be seen where the home-made cloth was dyed. The Romans introduced some of our principal fruit trees—the apple, the cherry, and the pear. They also brought over the pheasant, a tame bird to ornament British gardens. Pheasants ran wild in the woods after the Roman period ended, and we still eat the descendants of the Roman birds.

Roads Finally there are the roads, which form the most familiar feature of Roman Britain. Constructed in the first place for military purposes, and therefore connecting places of strategic importance, the roads were built with all the skill of the Roman military engineer, who showed a fine disregard for natural obstacles. Pushing straight through the forest, or raised above the marsh, the Roman roads were spread out fanwise from London—to Lincoln, to Chester, to Cirencester, and to the south-west—very much like the modern railway system. Once the conquest was completed (c. A.D. 85), the roads south of Lincoln and Chester lost their original military character and became convenient means of communication between peaceful civil towns. In the north, they always retained their military character and connected forts and fortresses (see map facing p. 16).

Straight and permanent, the roads are still there—a continuation of that fine system which the Romans provided from Brindisi to Boulogne, from Cadiz to Constantinople. Whether our Roman roads have been made into modern tarred motor-roads, or whether we find them, grass-grown and remote, running across country little frequented to-day, they remain to remind us of the majesty of the Roman Empire.

### 5. *The Decline of Rome*

causes of  
decline In the third century of the Christian era the power of Rome began to decline. One cause of its decline was the weakness of the central authority. The Roman government had become a despotism; and, as with all such governments, its success depended upon the despot's being an able man.

Unfortunately, able men were not always forthcoming; and the murder of one imperial adventurer after another taught the soldiers that the real power lay with the most successful general. Hence arose the civil wars which distracted the Empire, and prepared the way for its ruin.

At the same time the Gothic Wars served as a warning of the outward form that ruin was to take. The lands north of the Rhine and Danube had never been brought under the Roman system, though there were German wars from the time of Augustus onwards. Later on, other barbarian tribes settled along the Roman borders. Their natural greed incited them to share in the prosperity of the Empire. They were bought off; they were given lands; thousands were allowed to settle in the provinces; thousands more entered the Roman armies. This gradual penetration of barbarians into the Empire was dangerous, for outside the Empire dwelt their kinsmen, whose swelling numbers ever pressed on its borders.

The disruption of the Empire was stayed for a time by the vigorous policy of the Emperor Diocletian (284-305), who reorganized the government, controlled the army, and kept rebellion in check. But it was Diocletian who began the worst persecution of the Christians in Roman history. The Christians then formed about a tenth of the Empire population of a hundred millions. It was therefore not possible to exterminate them, but they suffered a terrible persecution which lasted ten years (303-13). Churches were pulled down, and men and women put to death with cruel tortures. In Britain, Gaul, and Spain the persecution was not so severe as elsewhere, since those provinces were ruled by Constantius Chlorus (father of Constantine the Great), who, though not a Christian, was a man of just and mild character. St. Alban suffered (304) at Verulam; his name is commemorated in the town of St. Albans. Doubtless there were other British martyrs.<sup>1</sup>

Constantius died at York (306), and it was there that his son Constantine was proclaimed Emperor by the legions. Constantine became a convert to Christianity and, by his famous Edict of Milan (313), he stopped the persecution of the

<sup>1</sup> Bede names Aaran and Julius.

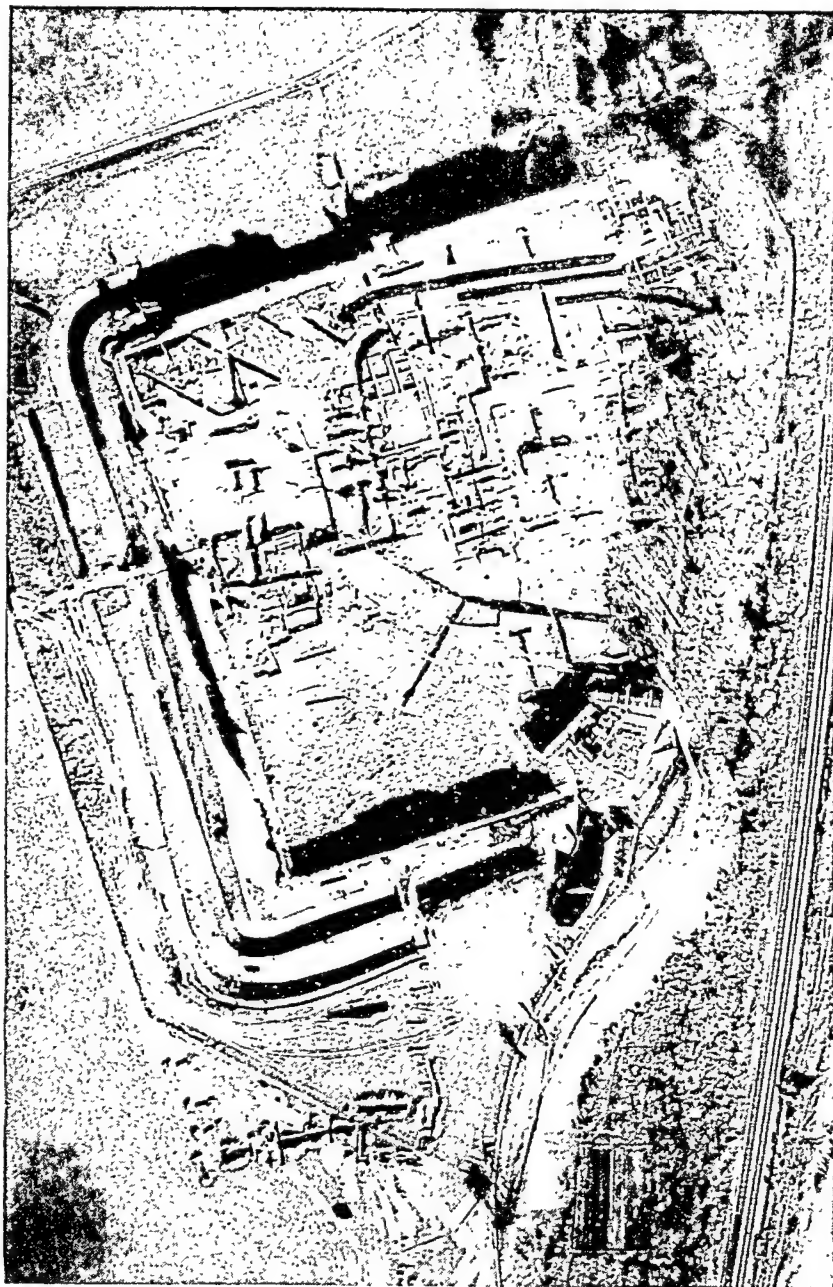
Christians. Though he was not himself baptized till just before his death (337), Constantine raised the formerly despised sect to imperial favour, and under his successors Christianity became the official religion of the Empire. However, the Church itself was soon torn by internal quarrels, and in the fourth century the whole Empire was once more endangered by barbarian invasions.

In Britain two main evidences of the decline of Rome can be seen: the rebellion of discontented or ambitious generals, and the barbarian invasions. These dangers began to appear towards the end of the third century. The first to be noted concerns the remarkable career of a Belgian adventurer named Carausius. He had been given the command of the *classis Britannica*; this fleet had been intended by the Romans as the police of the seas—with its head-quarters not in Britain but at Boulogne—to preserve order on either coast of the Straits of Dover. But Carausius saw that to rule the waves was to rule Britain, and he acted accordingly. He assumed the title of Emperor of Britain (A.D. 287), and maintained this position for six years in open defiance of the authority of the Roman Emperor.

His successor, as frequently happened in those days, was his murderer—a certain Allectus, who, having grasped the reins of power, continued defiance of the Emperor for another three years. At length Constantius (father of Constantine) defeated him (A.D. 296), and the province returned to its obedience. It was Constantius who designed a new system of coastal forts, as a protection against Saxon raids.<sup>1</sup> The forts were built round the coast from Lincolnshire to the Isle of Wight, and were placed under the command of an official called the Count of the Saxon Shore. They were about a dozen in number, and the remains of some of them are still imposing.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See below, p. 27.

<sup>2</sup> Burgh Castle (Suffolk), Richborough (Kent)—see illustration opposite—and Pevensey (Sussex) are the best preserved. At Burgh Castle, the walls still stand 15 feet high, while at Pevensey they are nearly twice that height. Forts of a similar character were also constructed in Wales, possibly against Irish pirates; their remains can be seen at Cardiff, Carnarvon, and Caer Gybi on Holyhead Island.



*Royal Air Force Official: Crown Copyright reserved.*

#### THE DEFENCE OF THE SAXON SHORE

Air view of the remains of Richborough Fort. The modern railway line runs between the Fort and the encroaching sea. The stone walls of the Fort are surrounded by earth bastions and ditches. Inside the Fort can be seen traces of earlier forts or encampments.

The forts of the Saxon Shore probably did their work for a time, and Britain had a respite from the Saxon pillages. But soon another danger appeared—raids of the Picts and Scots over the northern boundary. The Picts were the ancient inhabitants of Scotland, but the Scots came originally from Ireland, though they gave their name to the country of their adoption. They broke through Hadrian's Wall (367) and the northern defences, and swept, a savage host, over the civilized parts of Britain.

Picts and Scots  
The ruin of the province was hastened by the ambitions of usurpers who used the legions of Britain in their attempts to seize the imperial crown. The adventurer Maximus took a large proportion of the British legions across the Channel when he went to war with the Emperor Gratian (383). A later usurper followed his example; and the losses which were thus inflicted on the Roman army in Britain were never made good. After these adventures, the province was left practically defenceless.

Ruin of Britain  
Meanwhile hosts of barbarians—Goths, Franks, and Vandals, Angles and Saxons—burst into Gaul, Spain, Italy, and Britain, and made permanent settlements in those provinces. The opening of the fifth century—more than a thousand years after the foundation of Rome—saw the final catastrophe. A huge Gothic host rebelled under their king, Alaric, who sacked Rome itself (410). In that year of the Sack of Rome the Emperor Honorius was obliged to tell his British subjects to make what arrangements they could for their own safety.

Break-up of Western Empire  
Fresh bands of Saxons from the east, as well as Picts and Scots from the north, now assailed the unhappy province of Britain; and though the Britons were ready to fight, they nevertheless fought a losing battle. The so-called 'Halleluia Victory' (c. 429) availed them little; but it is interesting because on this occasion the Britons were commanded by a Gallic bishop named St. Germanus who had visited the land to preach—and it was with his war cry of 'Halleluia' that they terrified the invading barbarians.

Sack of Rome, 410  
By the middle of the fifth century the British were in desperate need. They still considered themselves Romans and, if we may believe the monk Gildas, they even made

Roman Britain overwhelmed . 400-450)

an appeal (446) to Aetius, a Roman minister: 'To Aetius in his third consulship come the groans of the Britons. The barbarians drive us to the sea, the sea drives us upon the barbarians. . . . We are either killed or drowned.' Then, the



THE BARBARIAN INVASIONS

The Western Empire did not survive the barbarian attacks of the 5th century: the Eastern Empire endured for another 1,000 years, though its area gradually diminished.

old chronicles say, a British chief named Vortigern decided to buy the aid of some Saxons named Hengist and Horsa against the more formidable Picts and Scots: or, in other words, to set a thief to catch a thief. At any rate the Saxons saw and seized their great opportunity, and their invasion began in earnest.

## DATE SUMMARY: ROME AND BRITAIN

FIRST CENTURY B.C.		EMPERORS <sup>1</sup>
55-4	Caesar in Britain	
44	<i>Murder of Caesar</i>	
	<i>Civil Wars</i>	Augustus (30 B.C.-A.D. 14)
FIRST CENTURY A.D.		
43	Claudian Conquest of Britain	Claudius (41-54)
61	Boadicea's Revolt	
		Vespasian (69-79)
77-85	Agricola	
84	✕ Mons Graupius	Domitian (81-96)
SECOND CENTURY		
	<i>Golden Age of Rome (96-180)</i>	
121	Hadrian's Visit	Hadrian (117-38)
140	Antonine Wall in Scotland	Antoninus Pius (138-61)
THIRD CENTURY		
	<i>Decline of Rome: Gothic Wars</i>	
211	Emperor Severus at York <i>d.</i>	Severus (193-211)
287-94	Carausius in Britain	Diocletian (284-305)
FOURTH CENTURY		
	<i>The Christian Empire</i>	
304	Martyrdom of St. Alban	
306	Emperor Constantius at York <i>d.</i>	Constantius (305-6)
313	<i>Edict of Milan</i>	Constantine (306-37)
325	<i>Foundation of Constantinople</i>	
		Gratian (375-83)
395	<i>Revolt of the Goths under Alaric</i>	
FIFTH CENTURY		
	<i>Further Decline of the Empire</i>	
410	<i>Sack of Rome by the Goths</i>	Honorius (395-423)
429	Halleluia Victory	
446	Appeal to Aetius	
449	Supposed landing of Hengist and Horsa	Romulus Augustulus (476)

<sup>1</sup> The dates of those mentioned in the text are given.



## II

### ENGLAND IN THE MAKING

#### I. *The Saxon Settlement*

THE two hundred years (roughly 400-600) which elapsed between the withdrawal of the Roman soldiers and the coming of the Roman missionaries are of great interest to the historian of our country, for in those years the English people was formed. Unfortunately, the history of this period is largely guesswork. We have two main kinds of evidence on which to base our guesses: one, the meagre and doubtful written records; the other, the revelations of the spade. Considering the written records first, there is only one contemporary account surviving: that of the monk Gildas, who actually lived through the devastations of the fifth century. But Gildas, it is evident, rather enjoyed assuming the role of a Hebrew prophet. He condemned the sins of his countrymen, and gloated over their misfortunes, which he exaggerated as being the symbol of the Divine wrath which he had foretold. There are later documents, including the history of the Venerable Bede (673-735) and the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, begun in the time of Alfred the Great. The early dates, facts, and persons mentioned in the *Chronicle* were for many years taken to be correct; but some of them can now be shown to be imaginary.

A gap in  
English  
History  
(c. 400-600)

Gildas

The Anglo-Saxon tribes all belonged to the Teutonic people, like the Franks, Goths, and Vandals who invaded the Roman Empire. Like their kinsmen, the later Norsemen, they were at home on the sea; and it is interesting to note that in a bog-deposit in the east of Schleswig two clinker-built boats about seventy feet long have been found, preserved practically complete, which belonged to this age. The Angles and Saxons migrated from south Denmark, north Germany, and Holland to the lowland coasts of Britain; and from the Angles came the name of the new island home they reached, England (Engla-land). The crossing of the North Sea in small boats is

The Anglo-  
Saxon in-  
vaders

no easy matter in rough weather, but it is possible that they did the voyage in short stages by keeping close to the coast most of the time. At intervals, throughout a century and more, they were crossing to their new home—just as their descendants centuries later crossed the ocean to find still farther west yet another New England.

The work of  
destruction

Arthur

Mons  
Badonis  
c. 500

The Saxons entered Britain on its eastern and least defensible side;<sup>1</sup> they probably came in considerable numbers but in scattered bands. A long-drawn-out warfare between the invaders and the Romano-Britons followed.<sup>2</sup> It is to this period that we must assign the heroic deeds of 'King' Arthur,<sup>3</sup> whose name is still commemorated in such places as Arthur's Seat (Edinburgh) and Cader Idris or Arthur's Chair (Wales). Arthur was a Romano-British leader who, according to the seventh-century *Historia Brittonum*, beat the Saxons in twelve great victories culminating in the battle of Mons Badonis. Gildas—a contemporary—says that the Saxons did not dare to renew their attacks for half a century after this battle. Arthur, it has been said,<sup>4</sup> was the last of the Romans; and no native leader with the traditions of the Empire arose after his time.

It took nearly two centuries (449–613) for the Saxon invaders to conquer central Britain, and naturally colonization was most thorough in the eastern districts where they first landed. The invaders used the rivers of eastern England as a means of advance, and it was on or near the rivers that the first settlements were made. We will now attempt, with the aid of the map (facing p. 29), to survey the area of these settlements.

The earliest comers (whom Bede calls the Jutes<sup>5</sup>) were the

<sup>1</sup> Compare maps facing p. 16 and p. 29, which show that the civilized part of Roman Britain was just the part which the Saxons invaded.

<sup>2</sup> The great earthwork known as the Wansdyke, running from the Bristol Channel to the Marlborough Downs, dates from this period, and was probably the wall of some British chief, defending the south-west against invaders from the north.

<sup>3</sup> He was not a king, but the general of all the British forces. (See Collingwood, *Oxford History of England*, vol. i, p. 321.) Many later legends gathered round his name, including the famous story of the Knights of the Round Table—see Malory's *Morte d'Arthur* and Tennyson's *Idylls of the King*.

<sup>4</sup> Collingwood, *ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> Bede divides the invaders into Angles, Saxons, and Jutes. But it





THE ANGLO-SAXON SETTLEMENT

Cantware, who have given their name to Canterbury, and were the founders of the kingdom of Kent. According to the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, they landed (449) at Ypwinesfleet (Ebbsfleet in Thanet) under two chiefs called Hengist and Horsa ('horse' and 'mare'); and from Thanet they overran Kent. A second settlement of the same people was made later in the Isle of Wight and south Hampshire.

Between these two settlements was the country conquered by the South Saxons—Sussex. The traditional founder of Sussex is Ælla, who, nearly thirty years after the supposed landing of Hengist and Horsa, is said to have arrived with his warriors in three ships. After a dozen years of fighting, the Romano-Britons were forced to yield up the fortress of Anderida (Pevensey); and Ælla and Cissa, says the *Chronicle*, 'slew all that were therein'. Sussex was an isolated kingdom, for it was cut off from the north by the huge forest of the Andredsweald. Nevertheless, Bede tells us that in Ælla's time the King of Sussex was the chief of the kings of Saxon England, and it is possible that he was the military leader of all the tribes who were then invading what are now the south-eastern counties.

Turning to the region of the Thames estuary we find a people known as the Middle Saxons settling north of the river (Middlesex) and also in the Suth Rige (Surrey), which means the *southern district* of the same kingdom. North-east of the Middle Saxons were the East Saxons, the founders of the kingdom of Essex (the modern Essex and Hertfordshire). Middlesex, including the reviving town of London, soon became dependent on Essex.

The rivers of the Fens—the Welland, the Nen, the Ouse and its tributaries—formed a convenient mode of advance for many tribes of the Anglo-Saxon invaders. They could not settle in the lower reaches of these rivers, owing to the marshy nature of the country; but they could push up them till they came to drier and more suitable land. In this way the Middle

is doubtful whether these distinctions were very marked. The name 'Saxon' included all the invaders; it was used by the Romano-Britons as a term of abuse, like Hun or Vandal. (See J. N. L. Myres in *Oxford History of England*, vol. i, pp. 343–51.)

Angles settled in Northamptonshire, Leicestershire, Bedfordshire, and Cambridgeshire; while the East Angles penetrated into Norfolk and Suffolk.<sup>1</sup> Another tribe, the Hwiccas, pushed across country and reached the Warwickshire Avon, and later founded a kingdom (Warwickshire and Worcestershire) between the Avon and the Severn. Burial-grounds of these folk have been found near Coventry, Rugby, and Stratford-on-Avon.

The kingdom of the West Saxons—destined to grow, in the fullness of time, into the kingdom of England—probably originated in the Upper Thames valley. It was here—at Dorchester-on-Thames, just below Oxford—that the seat of the West Saxon bishopric was first placed in Christian times. But long before this the West Saxons had mastered the whole land traditionally known as Wessex—Berkshire, Wiltshire, Hampshire, and Dorset.<sup>2</sup>

In the north, settlements were made in the lands watered by the tributaries of the Humber—the Trent and the Yorkshire Ouse. The Trent valley was settled by the Mercians, who, like the West Saxons, were destined to grow into a powerful people, absorbing the lands of their weaker neighbours. The name Mercia originally meant the march or border, and this means that the Mercians occupied the border-land near to the Britons. East of the Trent was Lindsey (north Lincolnshire), on the highlands of which settled a people called the Lindiswaras. In Yorkshire the chief area of settlement was the Wolds, which formed the nucleus of the kingdom of Deira. Separated from Deira by what is now the county of Durham (for long unsettled) was Bernicia (Northumberland), probably settled from Yorkshire by sea. Bernicia and Deira afterwards joined to form the powerful kingdom of Northumbria.

Such were some of the settlements made by the early Saxon invaders of eastern England. Our earliest historical records name ten kingdoms that arose out of the anarchy of the

<sup>1</sup> These two counties take their names from the division of the East Angles into North Folk and South Folk.

<sup>2</sup> The *Chronicle* says that the West Saxons landed in Hampshire and advanced *northwards*. Most modern archaeologists, however, think it more likely that they landed in the east of England and came to the Thames Valley *via* the Icknield Way (see map facing p. 29).

invasions. Later on these may have coalesced into seven kingdoms—the so-called period of the Heptarchy.<sup>1</sup> Then followed the Triarchy or rule of the three kingdoms—Northumbria, Mercia, Wessex.

The  
Heptarchy

How far did Roman civilization survive the Saxon conquest? Clearly the conquest was more thorough than in Gaul; there the Latin language was not stamped out, for it survives in modern French. This did not happen in England; ours is an Anglo-Saxon, not a Latin tongue. The Saxons had no use for the Roman villas which, excavation shows, were all abandoned and never reoccupied.

Again, the Saxons had no notion of town life, and though many towns were afterwards rebuilt on Roman sites<sup>2</sup> it is unlikely that they were able to keep their Roman traditions.

Roman  
towns

The Saxons, of course, did not destroy the Celts; they were not able, even if they had been willing, to exterminate a whole race, both males and females. As the conquest proceeded westward, and the resistance became stronger, a large number of Celts eventually settled down under English masters. Some were driven to Brittany, many others retired to the highlands of the north, and to Wales, which they long retained. In Wales, where Roman civilization had never fully established itself, the Celtic speech was maintained. Celtic survival in the west of England is proved by the large number of places bearing Celtic names. In many parts of England the old language has survived in the names of hills and rivers. The name Avon (Welsh Afon—British, *abonā*) is given to several rivers, while Axe, Exe, and Usk are all forms of the British *isca*, meaning water.

Celtic  
survival

Celtic  
place-  
names

The Saxons called the Britons Welsh (foreigners), while the Britons called themselves the Cymry (comrades). Wales remained independent for several centuries, and it was a long

<sup>1</sup> Northumbria, Mercia, Wessex, Kent, Sussex, East Anglia, and Essex.

<sup>2</sup> London, Rochester, Chichester, Winchester, Dorchester, Cirencester, Gloucester, Colchester, Chester, Exeter, Lincoln, and York may be quoted as examples of possible survival or at least of reoccupation after a short interval. On the other hand, Calleva (Silchester), Verulam, and Viroconium, once important towns, were utterly destroyed or abandoned, and have only been uncovered by the spade.

time before the invaders dared to cross the Severn. Farther south, the Celts of Somerset and Devon kept the West Saxons at bay, but the battle of Deorham (577) gave the West Saxons command of the Severn mouth and so cut off the Britons of Wales from their kindred in the south-west. The Lake District remained a Celtic stronghold for centuries; the Pennines preserved Lancashire and west Yorkshire from the invaders; and Chester was not captured by them till the beginning of the seventh century (613). This victory had the effect of separating the Britons in Wales from their kinsmen in Lancashire and Cumberland. Finally, across the English Channel, Celtic colonists founded Brittany, where the Breton language—akin to Welsh and Cornish—is still spoken.

When the light breaks on England at the landing of the Roman missionary, St. Augustine, we may discern a land divided about equally between Celt and Saxon, with much Celtic blood in the Saxon part, except in the extreme east. East Anglia, Essex, and Sussex were small isolated kingdoms. Kent seems then to have been important enough for its king to claim the overlordship of the island. Wessex stretched from the Channel to the Thames and also included Oxfordshire; Mercia included most of the Midlands. The kingdom of the Hwiccas in the Severn valley was probably subject to Wessex. Mercia, Wessex, and Northumbria were still pushing the Celts westward.

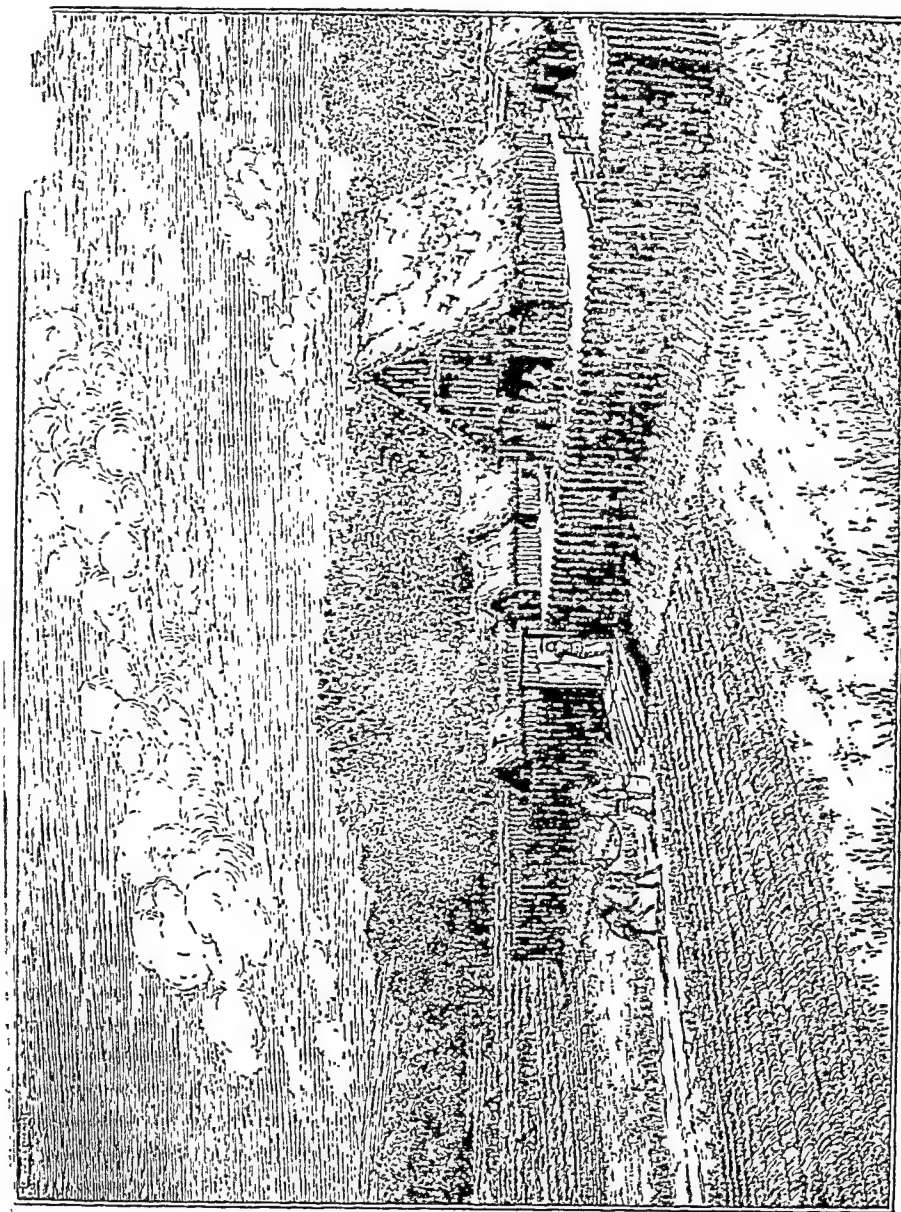
## 2. *Village, Hundred, and Shire*

The Saxon  
village

We may regard the early Anglo-Saxons as the originators of our present villages—our oldest institutions—and here we have something indeed worthy of study. We can still see the land, the hills and dales, where those early pioneers made their homes—and even their graves where the archaeologist has uncovered them for us. Their social habits and customs are the main sources from which English life has developed.

What was this land of ours like in the days when the Saxons made the villages? The Saxons described the land as fen, wood, and 'feld'. But the 'feld' (like the Dutch *veld*) was the very opposite of the modern (field) and meant a great stretch o





SAXON ENGLAND

Reconstruction of a Saxon 'tun', or agricultural settlement. The buildings are surrounded by a strong stockade to keep out marauders, with only one small entrance. The largest building is the hall, belonging to the lord of the tun.

unenclosed land. Forests then covered a great portion of the island, and the boar and wolf were as common as the fox is to-day. The ending *-ley* or *-lea* denotes a clearing in the forest and is very common in many counties, e.g. Henley (high meadow), Alderley (Ealdred's meadow).

There are several Anglo-Saxon names for a home, e.g. *ham* (a farm), *tun* (a farmstead), *cot* (a cottage), and *stead* (a dwelling)—which often form the endings of place-names, and have been combined with personal names or with word-descriptive of the type of country where the homestead lay (e.g. *Fenstead*). Another of the commonest Anglo-Saxon elements in our place-names is *-ing*, which often occurs in conjunction with *-tun* and *-ham*, as in *Wokingham*, meaning the home or farm of Wocc's people.

But if the first Saxon settlements were made by families or communities, it does not follow that the men in these communities were all equal. Even in their continental home the Saxons had some slaves, and they almost certainly enslaved the Britons in England. The Saxon freemen themselves were not equal: they were divided into *eorls* and *ceorls*—into Gentle and Simple. As time went on the *ceorl* tended to sink in the social scale, and the *eorl* to rise. Later we hear of another noble rank, the *thegn*, a term equivalent to the earlier *eorl*.

In Saxon times, and for centuries afterwards, the tilled or arable area of the village was divided into three large expanses of land, known as 'open fields' because there was no hedge or fence. One of these 'open fields' was sown in the autumn with wheat or rye (the bread crop), one in the spring with barley (the drink crop), while the third was left fallow or resting; and, by this system of rotation of crops, each field was rested every third year. The open fields were divided into *acre*<sup>1</sup> or half-acre strips, separated only by low 'baulks' of unploughed turf. These strips were distributed among the villagers; the

<sup>1</sup> An *acre* (related to Lat. *ager*, a field) came to be as much land as could be ploughed by a yoke of oxen in a day. Later, it was limited by statute to a piece 40 poles long (i.e. 220 yards or a furlong—the length of a furrow) by 4 poles wide (= 4,840 square yards), or its equivalent of any shape.

strips of any one villager, however, were not adjacent to each other but were scattered over the whole of the tilled area. The origin of this ancient system of farming is unknown, but it may have been adopted so that one man should not get all the good and another all the poor soil. Such a farm actually survives at Laxton (Notts) to this day, and the visitor is impressed by the absence of hedges and the 'openness' of the three large fields, with their strips still divided amongst about thirty tenants.

A somewhat later development in the organization of Anglo-Saxon life was the grouping of the villages into larger units called hundreds. The hundred has continued in existence till our own day, and some of our laws still speak of 'the inhabitants of the hundred'. The origin of the name is unknown—it may have once meant the land occupied by a hundred families, and in some instances it was deemed to contain exactly a hundred hides.<sup>1</sup> The hundred had a court of justice, held once a month. It was attended by the local thegns and by four 'best' men from each village. In the north of England the name hundred afterwards gave place to the Danish name wapentake.

The villages, then, were grouped into hundreds, and later the hundreds were grouped into shires, which are still to-day our main units of local government. The shires of Essex, Sussex, and Kent were each at first small kingdoms, while the shires of Norfolk and Suffolk were formed by the two divisions of the kingdom of East Anglia. Wessex was also divided into shires in very early times. But the 'shiring' of Mercia did not take place till the time of Edward the Elder,<sup>2</sup> the son of Alfred the Great. The shire was the care of an officer known as the shirereeve (sheriff) appointed by the king to administer justice. He held a court, called the shire-moot, twice a year. Under Norman rule, the division into shires was continued, the word 'county' (Anglo-French *comté*) being adopted as the equivalent of the English term.

The highest assembly in a Saxon kingdom was the Witan, then presided over by the king, who summoned to it at his discretion

<sup>1</sup> A hide (120 acres) was the original land of a Saxon household.

<sup>2</sup> See below, p. 59.

the chief men of his kingdom. The Witan was consulted in the making of the laws and in the choosing of a new king: it could also depose a bad king.

The laws or 'dooms' of Saxon England which have come down to us date from Christian times. The two earliest legal codes are those set down by Ethelbert of Kent—the convert of St. Augustine—and King Ine of Wessex (died 725). But these codes—especially the first—embody laws handed down from much earlier times: they are Germanic, not Roman, in origin. According to them, criminals could be dealt with in three ways: by fines, by the action of the blood-feud, and by outlawry. The first of these methods of punishment is found in the code of King Ethelbert of Kent (died 616): 'If one man strike another on the nose with his fist—three shillings. . . . If the eye be struck out, let boot (i.e. amends) be made with 50 shillings.' This simple 'tariff' was also applied to murder; and from the laws of King Ine we learn that the murderer paid compensation, called *wergeld* (*wer*, man; *geld*, money) to his victim's relations according to a definite scale of values. This varied in different kingdoms; in Mercia the *ceorl's* *wergeld* was 200 shillings, the *thegn's* 1,200. The king himself was valued at six times a *thegn*. This system of fines was probably imposed on the earlier custom of the blood-feud, by which the family of the murdered man avenged itself on the family of the murderer—a system which must in time have led to anarchy. Finally, there was the custom of outlawry for notorious criminals. An outlaw was put outside the law, and it was the duty of all law-abiding men to 'waste his land and burn his house, to pursue him and knock him on the head as though he were a beast of prey'.

### 3. *Heroes and Gods*

Our Anglo-Saxon forefathers were as fond of eating and drinking as they were of fighting; and they loved to gather round the fire at night and listen to tales of battle told over their ale or mead. In the king's hall the old legends would be sung by the minstrels. Handed down from one generation to another, these legends embodied the traditions of the race. The most famous of them is the epic of Beowulf. It survives

in a West Saxon copy of about the year 1000, and is the most precious relic of Old English, and, indeed, of all early Germanic literature. The story, which is one of the ancient tales of heathen Scandinavia, describes the adventures of Beowulf in his contests with two ogres and a dragon. Such legends were brought by the Saxons from their continental home and remained current among them for many years after their settlement in England.

The epic of Beowulf breathes the spirit of courage; and courage was the greatest virtue of Saxon paganism, as it was of the kindred belief of Germany and Scandinavia. Little is known about the gods of the Anglo-Saxons, though the names of some of them survive in the days of the week. Wednesday, for instance, is the day of Woden (Norse Odin), the chief of the gods. Tuesday is derived from Tiw, a war god; while Thursday is the day of Thunor (Norse Thor), the Thunderer, whose wagon could be heard rumbling over the mountains of the sky, and the sound of whose giant hammer terrified poor mortals.

Some of our Christian celebrations are old heathen festivals converted to more decorous uses. The holly and the burning log, the eating and drinking and good cheer, which we associate with Christmas, belong more properly to the older pagan Yuletide, which lasted throughout the months of December and January, and was a festive season during which sacrifices were made for good luck in the coming year. The name of Easter is derived from the heathen goddess Eostre, who returned every April to greet the spring—a spring whose beauty was stained by the blood of human victims, sacrificed at the sowing of the corn.

Memories of the old gods still linger in a few English place-names. Woden is commemorated in Wednesbury, while the great earthwork known as the Wansdyke<sup>1</sup> or Woden's Dyke was sacred to him. The village of Thundersley (Essex) takes its name from Thunor. The Saxon name for a temple or sacred place was *hearh*, which we can trace in Harrow. Even the dragons and giants were not forgotten; Drakelow (Derbyshire)

<sup>1</sup> The Wansdyke starts in Savernake Forest, then runs westward over the Marlborough Downs. Its total length is 80 miles.

means dragon's mound, and Shuckburgh (Warwickshire) goblin's hill.

Pagan  
customs

At last the time came when the worship of the gods gave way before the message of the Christian Gospel. Some of the ancient customs, like the celebration of Yuletide, lingered on; as did the belief in elves and other supernatural beings. Nor could the Church prevent the villagers from decking themselves with flowers and greenery on May Day, as they had done from time immemorial. But still Christianity gradually gained ground. 'Gratia tibi, bone Iesu', says the monk Bede, writing a century after the Conversion, 'Thou hast converted us from these deceits and hast allowed us to offer Thee sacrifices of praise.'

#### 4. *The Return of Christianity*

The Celtic  
saints

A knowledge of Christianity was the last great gift of the Roman Empire to Britain. But when the Saxon invasion overwhelmed Roman civilization in Britain, Christianity was almost wiped out—except in those western parts of the land where the Celts maintained their independence. These Celtic Christians hated their Saxon enemies too much to wish to convert them; nor had they any contact with the growing church organization of Rome. They lived a life apart, and produced a crop of local saints unknown to the rest of Europe.

St. Patrick

St. Patrick, a man of Romano-British origin, was born probably in the lower Severn region. At the age of sixteen he was carried off by pirates to Ireland, to 'the ultimate places of the earth', as he pathetically remarks. There he was kept in slavery for six years. Escaping, he made his way to Gaul and entered a Mediterranean monastery. Here he was first brought into close contact with the two factors which shaped the course of his life—the monastic ideal, and the visible signs of the Roman government, now fast disappearing in Britain. After visiting his parents in Britain some years later, he determined to convert the Irish to Christianity. In Ireland he spent the remainder of his life, and he founded the church and monastery at Armagh of which he was the first bishop. Learning went hand in hand with religion among the Irish monks, and they possessed a knowledge of Roman literature, then fast dying out in western Europe.

The Irish saints were great missionaries: they founded monasteries as far afield as Italy and Switzerland. They crossed over to Britain, where they had great influence on the Celtic Churches of Wales, and also of Cornwall, which was at the time a flourishing Christian land and far removed from the advance of the pagan Saxons.<sup>1</sup>

It was another Irish saint, St. Columba, who founded (about 550) a monastery on the small island of Iona off the west coast of Scotland. Here he established friendly relations with the Christian Scots who dwelt in Argyllshire and the neighbouring islands and who had originally come from Ireland.<sup>2</sup> St. Columba's great work was the conversion of the heathen Picts, who lived in the north and east parts of Scotland.

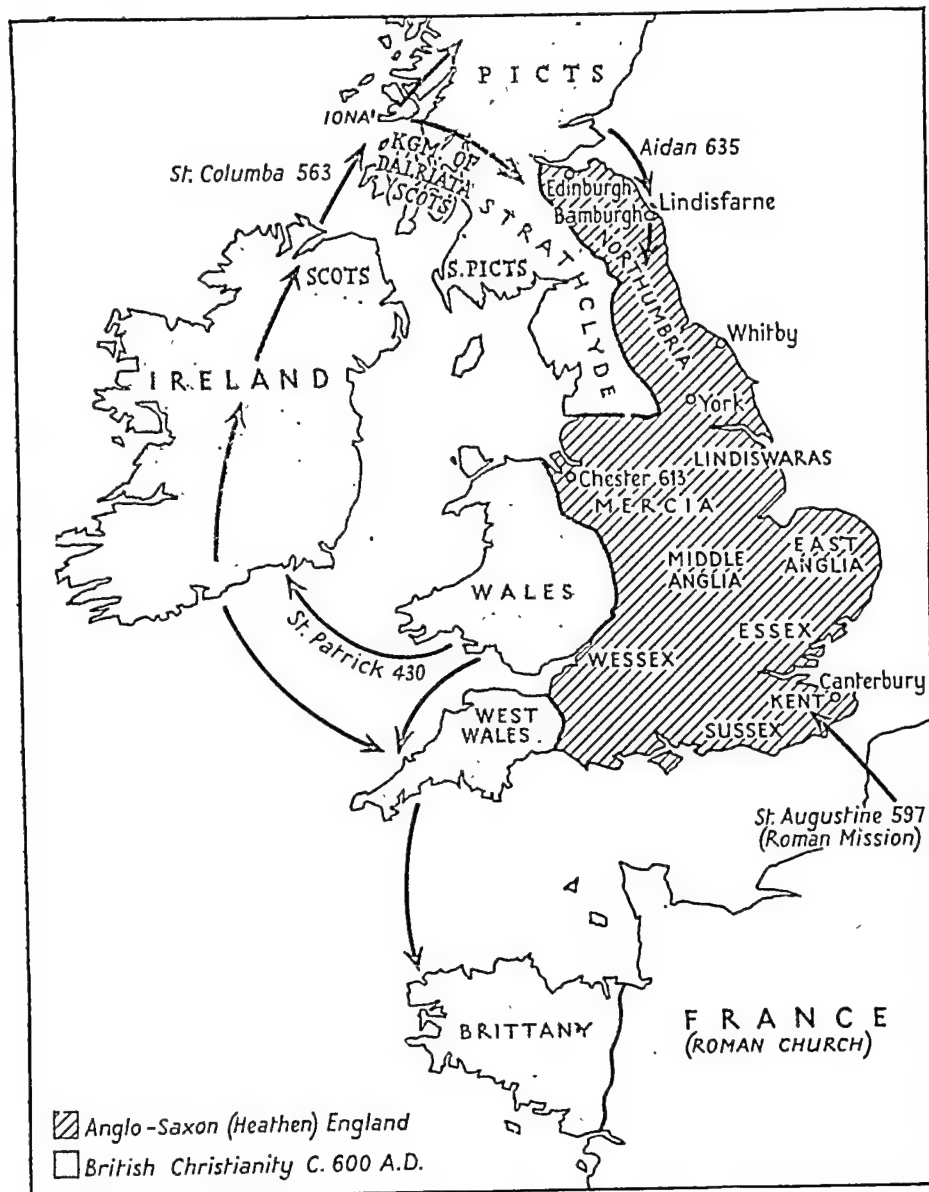
While the Celtic parts of the British Isles were thus preserved from the darkness of heathendom, the presence of the Saxon kingdoms cut them off from the civilization of Europe. But in Europe the monastic revival under St. Benedict gave a new impetus to missionary fervour and paved the way for the conversion of Saxon England.

St. Benedict (480-543) was born in Italy about a hundred years after St. Patrick. At the age of fifteen he took up his abode in a lonely cave situated in a wild and deserted gorge, and the fame of his holy life attracted many curious visitors. He later founded, on Monte Cassino near Naples, a monastery where his monks lived under strict discipline, defined by the 'Rule' which St. Benedict made for them. In his famous 'Rule', St. Benedict demanded that his monks should not only take the three vows of obedience, chastity, and poverty, but that they should divide their time between manual work

<sup>1</sup> In the Land's End district the Irish missionaries were active. Some were slain by Tewdwr, pagan king of Penwith (or Pen-gwaed, which means the Bloody Headland and is the Cornish name for Land's End). The names of these heroic missionaries still survive in the villages; e.g. St. Ives is a corruption of St. Ia, daughter of an Irish chieftain, and one of the first missionaries.

<sup>2</sup> The original Scottish kingdom in the West Highlands was called Dalriata (see map, p. 40). It was the succession of a later Scottish king, Kenneth MacAlpin, to the combined Scottish and Pictish kingdom (ninth century), which gave to the whole country its present name of Scotland.

(in farm or garden), study, and prayer. Instead of the life of pure contemplation which earlier monks had followed,



BRITISH CHRISTIANITY AND THE SAXONS

St. Benedict insisted on the value of work: *Laborare est Orare*, 'To work is to pray', he taught. The 'Rule' of St. Benedict became all over Europe the model for monasteries, and it was he who gave to the monastic life a definite system. The



Benedictine Rule, by leaving a good deal to the discretion of the Abbot, proved elastic enough to be adopted in countries as distant and as different as south Italy and England.

The work of St. Benedict would have been incomplete without that of St. Gregory the Great, who was born three years before the older saint died. Gregory was a member of a noble Roman family, and inherited both great wealth and great traditions. When he was thirty-five a great change came over his life. He gave up all his possessions except his house, and turning this into the monastery of St. Andrews, he devoted himself to the ideals of St. Benedict. It was while Gregory was Abbot of St. Andrews that he first determined to send a mission to England.

The well-known story comes to us from the pages of the Venerable Bede:

'They say that on a certain day when many things were collected in the market-place for sale, Gregory himself saw some boys put up for sale, of a white body and fair countenance, and with hair of remarkable beauty, whom when he beheld he asked from what land they were brought. And it was said that they were brought from the island of Britain.'

It was on this occasion that Gregory made his famous pun on the name of the English. Hearing that they were called Angles he replied: 'Non Angli, sed angeli', for 'they have the faces of angels and shall be made co-heirs with the angels in Heaven.' Then he inquired from what province they came. 'From Deira', was the reply. 'Deira, Yea, verily they shall be saved from God's ire (*de ira*) and called to the mercy of Christ. How is the king of that country named?' 'Aella'. 'Then', said the Abbot, 'must Alleluia be sung in Aella's land.' Soon after this he set out for Britain, but was recalled to Rome by the prayers of the citizens.

In later life, Gregory was made Pope, and the period (590-604) during which he held this office forms a landmark in European history. He was the first of the great Popes—the real founder of the powerful Papacy of the Middle Ages. Rome and Italy had now fallen on evil days. The capital of the Roman Empire was at Constantinople and, though the Emperor still kept a precarious hold on Italy, most of that country

was in the hands of the Lombards. Gaul and Spain, though Christian, were separated from the Empire, and England was cut off by Saxon paganism. It was Gregory's work to reunite in the Catholic Church these scattered elements of western Christendom, and to teach the men of western Europe to look once more to Rome as the centre of their world. To this end he laboured and after his death the unity of western Christendom under the Church was an accomplished fact.

The conversion of England was an important part of Pope Gregory's scheme. He was encouraged by the knowledge that King Ethelbert of Kent had recently married a Frankish princess who was a Christian. He selected his friend Augustine and forty monks for the task. They crossed Europe and landed at Ebbsfleet in Thanet (597).

Few stories are better known than that which tells how King Ethelbert, seated in the open air with his nobles around him, and accompanied by Bertha, his Christian wife, received the mission of Augustine. The king listened to the preaching of the monks, and heard their strange chants and litanies. 'Your words are fair', he said, 'but they are new and I cannot yet forsake what I have so long followed.' But he gave them leave to reside in his royal city of Canterbury. They restored the ruined church of St. Martin, outside the city, which had survived from Roman times; and presently they converted first the king and then the whole of his kingdom. Here, however, Augustine's success ended. For, lacking the fierce energy of Gregory, he was not able to convert the other English kingdoms, while his meeting with the Celtic Christian bishops, at which he lost his temper, was a failure. The Pope, however, was impatient to see the whole island converted. He caused Augustine to be consecrated Archbishop of Canterbury, and two more bishoprics were founded at Rochester and London.

Soon after this, the first attempt was made to convert the north of England. Edwin, King of Northumbria (617-33), was at this time the most powerful monarch in the island. He was married to Ethelburga, the daughter of the newly converted King of Kent. She brought with her to the north the saintly Roman monk, Paulinus, through whose efforts Edwin and all his court were presently converted. And such was the

influence of this new missionary that Coifi, the heathen high priest, himself commanded his companions to destroy his heathen temple. 'This place where the idols were, is still shown', says Bede, 'and it is now called Godmundingham,<sup>1</sup> where the high priest, by the inspiration of the true God, destroyed the altars which he had himself consecrated.'

But this triumph was short lived. Eight years later Edwin was slain in battle by Penda, the pagan King of Mercia, at Heathfield, near Doncaster (633). Northumbria immediately fell into anarchy; Paulinus and the queen fled: and Christianity disappeared.

Penda of  
Mercia

The following year Oswald, a prince of the royal house, who had been brought up as a Christian, returned from Iona, where he had taken refuge while Penda had been ravaging Northumbria. He re-established the Northumbrian kingdom, and, what was no less important, sent for a monk from Iona, to convert his kingdom. One named Aidan eventually arrived, and he established himself in the island of Lindisfarne, or Holy Island, which became the seat of his bishopric. Aidan was renowned for the simplicity of his life and for his good works, 'for all things which were given him by kings or rich men of the world, he delighted to dispense to the poor whom he met with'. It was Aidan and his fellow monks who converted both the north and the midlands.

St. Aidan

The good Oswald met the same fate as his predecessor, King Edwin: he was killed by Penda of Mercia at the battle of Maserfield (642), a place which is thought to be Oswestry (that is, Oswald's Tree). Penda also slew two succeeding kings of East Anglia, which had recently accepted the Christian faith. But at last—at the age of 80—the career of this scourge of Christianity was brought to a close: he was slain at the battle of Winwidfield (655) near Leeds by Oswy, the next King of Northumbria.

Death of  
Penda, 655

During Aidan's time, monasteries were founded at York and Ripon, Hexham and Melrose. His disciple, St. Chad, became (after Penda's death) the apostle of the Mercians, with his see at Lichfield (670); and another northern saint

<sup>1</sup> Godmundingham is now Goodmanham, on the Derwent, east of York.

converted Essex. Roman missionaries completed the conversion of the south and the east (Wessex and East Anglia). Sussex—the last stronghold of paganism—owed its conversion (681) to St. Wilfrid of Ripon who had already preached on the Continent. The conversion of England was at last, after nearly a century's efforts, complete (597–681).

The Con-  
version  
completed

St. Wilfrid was the leading spirit in the decision taken at the famous Council or Synod of Whitby (664), summoned by King Oswy. Here at last the rival Celtic and Roman missions met face to face. The monks of the Celtic Church, who had been responsible for the conversion of the north and the midlands, were not at first willing to admit the authority of Rome. But the Celtic party was defeated by the eloquence of Wilfrid. King Oswy, who presided, clinched the matter when Colman owned that the keys of Heaven had been given not to St. Columba of Iona but to St. Peter of Rome. 'This is the door-keeper whom I am loath to contradict, and whose ordinances I desire to obey', said the king, 'lest when I come to the gates of the Kingdom of Heaven there shall be none to open them if I have lost the favour of him who keeps the keys thereof.'

Synod of  
Whitby, 664

Results of  
the Union  
with Rome

In the course of the succeeding century the example of Whitby was followed in Ireland, Scotland, and Wales. This decision was of the greatest importance in the future history of England, for it meant that the English Church was no longer to be a separate institution but a part of the main body of Catholic Christendom; and it established the connexion with Rome which was not broken for nine centuries. St. Wilfrid at Whitby revived that contact with the culture of ancient Rome and Greece that Julius Caesar's landing had begun and St. Augustine's mission had restored. Rome, 'the Eternal City', had been the head of the pagan world, the seat of the power of the Caesars; and it was now the seat of the Pope, the successor of St. Peter, the first Christian in the first Christian city of the world. 'To fight against Rome', said St. Wilfrid at Whitby, 'is to fight against the world.'

### 5. *Churches and Monasteries*

Theodore  
of Tarsus,  
668–90

The Pope followed up the Synod of Whitby by sending Theodore of Tarsus, a Greek monk from St. Paul's own city,

to organize a united English Church (668). Already more than sixty years of age when he arrived, he yet ruled as Archbishop of Canterbury for over twenty years. During that time he organized England into dioceses and parishes. There were only eight dioceses when Theodore came to England; he sub-divided them and so increased the number to fifteen; two more, Selsey and Sherborne, were added shortly after his death. Of our present cathedral churches, Canterbury, Rochester, and London were founded by St. Augustine; York and Lichfield rather later; and Hereford and Worcester by Theodore.<sup>1</sup>

The parish system needed no foundation, for the parish was simply the village regarded from the point of view of church organization. But the monasteries were still the main centres of religious influence, and few parishes had their own priests till Theodore's time. Parish churches were often endowed with glebe land by the local thegns; and to this day the squire sometimes has the right of 'advowson', that is of presenting a parson to a living. But, as the number of parishes increased, some definite means of subsistence was necessary for the priests, and so it became the common duty of all Christians to devote to God's service a tenth part or tithe of their goods or produce.

Archbishop Theodore thus laid the foundations of the Roman system of church government—with archbishops in provinces ruling over bishops in dioceses, who in their turn ruled over priests (rectors and vicars) supported by tithes in their parishes, with the Pope at the head of all. Diocese, parish, and tithe—all dating from Saxon times—have survived to this day. In thus laying the foundations of the English Church, Theodore also did much to promote the union of the English nation, for at a time when there were at

<sup>1</sup> But we should hardly recognize in the quiet little town of Dorchester-on-Thames (nine miles from Oxford) the principal see of the kingdom of Wessex (afterwards moved to Winchester); or in the ruin on the lonely island of Lindisfarne a rival to the stately minster of York. Elmham (Norfolk) and Sioncester (Lincolnshire) did not survive (as sees) the horrors of the Danish wars; while Dunwich (Suffolk) has suffered the most curious fate of all: most of it has disappeared under the sea.

least seven separate kingdoms the Church was the main unifying force.

Rural England, with cottages clustering round the village church, came into being in those early Christian centuries. The village and the parish, our most ancient institutions, grew up together to form a familiar and still enduring picture. The churches of to-day, of course, are not those which the Saxons built. But a great many are built on the sites of original Saxon churches, and in most counties it is possible to find a few parish churches that show some Saxon features dating from the ninth or tenth century (see illustration opposite).

The village  
churches

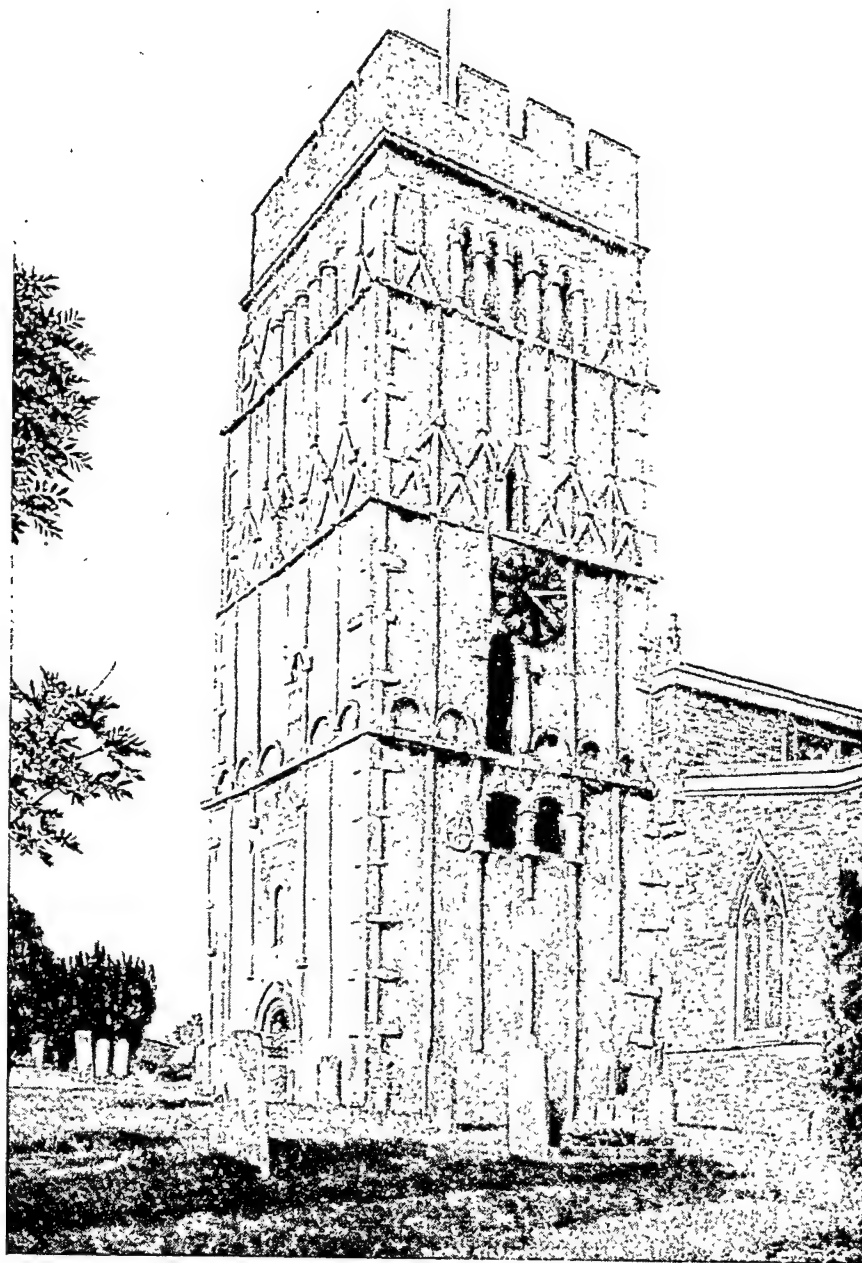
What were the main results of the conversion of England? The linking up of England with Catholic Europe after the Synod of Whitby, and the unifying effect of Theodore's reform, have already been noted. There remains the moral result. Every one must be struck by the contrast presented by the saintly lives of Augustine and his companions with the blood-thirsty warriors whose deeds stain the pages of Anglo-Saxon annals. Murder was a common event in Saxon England and warfare was almost incessant. Yet, in those very times, Christianity was brought to England by men who, as Bede says, imitated the apostolic life of the early Church, who converted the people by 'the simplicity of their innocent life'. The monastic ideal, as set out by St. Benedict, was frankly recognized as being too hard for the ordinary man: the life of 'the religious' was a thing apart. This explains the reverence felt for the monks as long as they lived up to their ideal, which was to combine holiness with learning.

The Saxon  
Saints

And it was during the Northumbrian supremacy that early monasticism produced its finest fruits. On the banks of the Tweed, in the Yorkshire dales, or on the North Sea coast, arose abbeys such as Melrose, Jarrow, Hexham, Ripon, Whitby, and Lindisfarne, which became renowned throughout Europe. The holy St. Cuthbert (625-87) was Abbot of Lindisfarne before he became bishop there; but much of the saint's time was spent in the wild islands off the North Sea coast. For eight years he lived alone on one of the Farne Islands in a cell which he built for himself—so built that its occupant could see neither sea nor land but must direct his gaze to the heavens.

Northumbrian  
monasteries

St. Cuthbert



#### SAXON ARCHITECTURE

The magnificent tower of Earl's Barton church, in Northamptonshire, built in the tenth century. The 'pilaster-strips' with which the tower is decorated are characteristic of English architecture in the Saxon period. The battlements are a later addition. (Compare illustrations on pp. 199, 201.)

If such a life as St. Cuthbert's seems almost too saintly to be real, we must remember that the monastic life offered great attractions to all gentle and reflecting minds in a world of violence. The monasteries were oases in a desert.

'To see the Lowlands as they were in Cuthbert's day, we must sweep meadow and farm away again, and replace them by vast solitudes, dotted here and there with clusters of wooden huts and crossed by boggy tracks over which travellers rode spear in hand and eyes kept cautiously about them.'<sup>1</sup>

Only in the monastery could real peace be found; only there could learning flourish and lives be dedicated to quietude and meditation.

In the eighth century the Northumbrian monasteries produced some of the foremost scholars in Europe. The most famous of these was the Venerable Bede (673-735), the monk of Jarrow, the greatest scholar of that dark age. He was the author of the *Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, from which we derive much of our knowledge of the Saxon period. Bede spent his whole life in the same monastery, and his greatest pleasure, as he tells us, lay in learning, teaching, or writing. At these tasks he toiled till the day of his death. 'There is yet one sentence to be written, dear master,' said one of his pupils on the morning of his death, as Bede was dictating a translation of St. John's Gospel. 'Write it quickly,' said his master. Presently the scribe said, 'It is finished now.' 'You speak truth,' said the old man, 'all is finished now.' And thus, seated on the pavement of his cell, the father of English History passed quietly away.

Death of  
Bede, 735

From Northumbria also came the earliest of our English poets whose name is known to us, Caedmon, a lay-brother in the Abbey of Whitby. His gift for song seemed to the men of that day a divine inspiration. Bede tells a story of a heavenly visitor who appeared before him in his sleep and said: 'Caedmon, sing some song to me.' Caedmon answered that he knew no verses, and could not even join in the songs sung round the hall fire at night. 'Yet you shall sing to me,' answered the voice. 'What shall I sing?' asked Caedmon, and the other replied: 'Sing the beginning of created things.' In

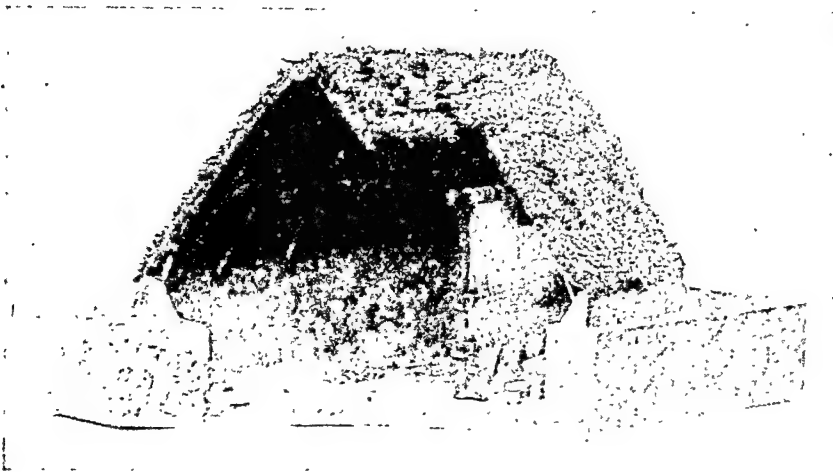
Caedmon

<sup>1</sup> J. R. Green, *History of the English People*, i. 3.



this way Caedmon, it is said, began to make verses and to sing 'the praise of God who created heaven for the sons of men, and next the earth'.

It is difficult to over-estimate the benefits conferred by the monastic system in the early Christian centuries. The parish priest was often as ignorant as his flock, but the monks had the monopoly of learning. They, and the higher clergy, were the only educated men in an illiterate population. This was one secret of their power and the reason for their presence at the councils of kings. While the warriors destroyed one another in battle, and the peasants wore themselves out in dull, unremitting toil, the work of the Church never ceased. It was largely that work which eventually produced the civilization of medieval England in place of the barbarism of our pagan Saxon forefathers.



THE SAXONS

A reconstruction in the British Museum of a Saxon weaver's hut unearthed at Bourton-on-the-Water, a village in the Cotswolds.

### III

## SAXON AND DANE

### 1. *Offa and Egbert*

From Augustine to Alfred (600-900) THE three centuries which separate St. Augustine from Alfred the Great are apt to be regarded as an uninteresting period. Yet much of Britain was then in the making; while, in European history, the period is an important one. Mohammed, whose career changed the history of the world, was living about the same time as St. Augustine and Gregory the Great; Charlemagne, who revived the Roman Empire in the West, was a contemporary of Offa of Mercia and Egbert of Wessex.

Mohammed (d. 632) The triumphal entry of Mohammed into his native city of Mecca, which had driven him out seven years earlier, occurred only three years before his death (632). It fell to his successors, known as the Caliphs, to lead the fanatical Moslem armies on a career of victory. These fierce soldiers swept, in the course of a few years, over the former Roman provinces of Syria, Egypt, and North Africa, which were for ever lost to the Empire, and have ever since been Mohammedan countries.

Moslem conquests They crossed (711) the Straits of Gebel-el-Tarik or Gibraltar (named after their leader, Tarik), and subdued the Gothic kingdom of Spain. They ruled Spain for five hundred years; and they were not finally expelled till the time of Columbus. These startling events had no effect on England at the time; but, in after years, the fact that Syria and Palestine were Mohammedan countries caused some Englishmen, along with other western Europeans, to go on the Crusades, with the object of restoring these lands to Christian rulers.

The most famous of Mohammed's successors, Haroun-al-Raschid, Caliph of Baghdad, famed in the *Arabian Nights*, exchanged letters and presents with Charlemagne (Charles the Great), King of the Franks. Charlemagne, the greatest monarch in western Europe since the fall of Rome, was a patron of learning and education; he summoned Bede's disciple, Alcuin, from England to his own court to found a school

where his own family was educated. Charlemagne was crowned Roman Emperor by the Pope at Rome on Christmas Day, 800. His revived Western Empire was an attempt to unite Germany, France, and Italy under one rule. France became a separate state soon after his death, and has remained so ever since. In 962 Otto the Great, King of the Germans, assumed the title of Holy Roman Emperor,<sup>1</sup> which carried with it the acknowledged headship of Europe. The Empire so formed endured for nearly a thousand years.

Charle-  
magne  
crowned  
Emperor  
(800)

The Holy  
Roman  
Empire

Returning to England, we view a somewhat confused scene: a scene of perpetual conflict, of which it is difficult to trace even the outlines. Any traveller in the non-industrial parts of England must be struck with the quietness and beauty of the ordinary village scene; it is the internal peace of centuries that has made rural England what it is. Far different was its state in Saxon times, when, indeed, the whole country was one huge battlefield, the scene of a warfare which seldom ceased. Yet we must beware of exaggerating the importance of these battles: they were of a very different character from the ghastly affairs of modern times. A few hundred or a few thousand unmounted warriors met at close quarters and hacked at each other with swords, or thrust with the spear, against which the only defence was the round shield:

Warfare in  
Saxon  
England

Clang battleaxe, and clash brand—

we seem to hear again the noise of battle in Tennyson's lines. But the echo of all this is drowned in the more horrific sounds made by the modern fighting man; and, if we think of the Anglo-Saxons as children playing at soldiers, we may regret that the human race has grown up no wiser, but only more destructive.

The wars of early England (from St. Augustine's death to

<sup>1</sup> Note the succession of empires. (i) The *Roman Empire* from Augustus (31 B.C.) to Romulus Augustulus (476), but continuing around Constantinople—the Eastern or *Byzantine Empire*—till the Turks destroyed it (1453); (ii) the empire revived as the *Holy Roman Empire*, (800–1806), first by Charlemagne, the Frank, crowned Roman Emperor Christmas Day, 800, by Pope Leo III, and (iii) secondly by Otto I, the German, 962; after which it went on—'a shadow with a deep meaning'—till Francis of Austria dissolved it, at Napoleon's bidding, in 1806.

Alfred's death) may be divided for convenience into three groups: (i) the interminable fights between the different English kingdoms for ascendancy, which Northumbria, Mercia, and Wessex achieved in turn; (ii) the Welsh wars, which were fought all along the border from Cumberland to Devon and which made the West Country part of England; and (iii) the wars resulting from the Danish invasions.

The supremacy of Northumbria in the seventh century (600-700) was marked by Paulinus's conversion of King Edwin—whose kingdom reached from the river Trent to the Forth; by St. Aidan's mission under King Oswald; by King Oswy's defeat of the pagan Penda of Mercia; and by St. Wilfrid's triumph at the Synod of Whitby.<sup>1</sup> The eclipse of Northumbria followed the disastrous battle of Nectansmere (685). King Egfrith was slain by the Pictish warriors on that far-off Highland moor, and the news sent St. Cuthbert to his grave. After Bede's time Northumbria gradually declined. Domestic troubles crowded thick upon her; and assassination hurried several of her later kings to an untimely end.

The eighth century, when Bede flourished in Northumbria, was the century of Mercian supremacy, and it is almost filled by the reigns of the two Mercian kings, Ethelbald (716-57) and Offa (757-96). Offa's reign was marked by considerable conquests on the Welsh border. This advance of the Saxons westward was permanent; and their warfare against their Welsh enemies was unceasing. Offa drove the king of Powys in north Wales across the Severn, and took from him the town of Pengwyrn; and he changed this Welsh name to the good English one of Scrobsbyrg, which the reader may recognize as Shrewsbury. Offa then turned on the southern Welsh, and drove them back as far as the Wye. Then he made a ditch, 130 miles long, from the mouth of the Wye to the mouth of the Dee, to mark the new boundary of his kingdom. This Offa's Dyke may still be traced over a great part of its course.

Ine, King of Wessex, conquered Somerset, and was the founder of Taunton (c. 710). Then followed the conquest of Dyvnaint, or Devon—though we can only imagine the battles in the combes, for concerning these history is silent. Cornwall

<sup>1</sup> See above, pp. 42-4.

was a harder problem. King Egbert of Wessex (802-39) crossed the Tamar and compelled the submission of the last 'West Welsh' province; but the Saxons had by no means heard the last of the Cornish. In later times Cornishmen helped the Danes against King Alfred, and were only driven from Exeter by the efforts of that king's grandson.

With King Egbert began the supremacy of Wessex (825-1066). Egbert defeated the Mercians at Ellandune in Wiltshire (825). This victory was followed by the subjection of Mercia, which surrendered to Wessex its vassal kingdoms of Kent, Sussex, and Essex. Even Northumbria then acknowledged Egbert as her overlord; and, as he had already conquered Cornwall, he might, with some reason, claim to be the overlord of England. But it is a mistake to think of Egbert as the first king of a united England. Wessex had been victorious before; but so had Mercia. The reason why we hear no more of these provincial wars is that the Danish invasions shortly overwhelmed all the kingdoms except one. Wessex alone survived, and when the successors of Egbert had beaten the Danes they at last achieved the union of Anglo-Saxon England.

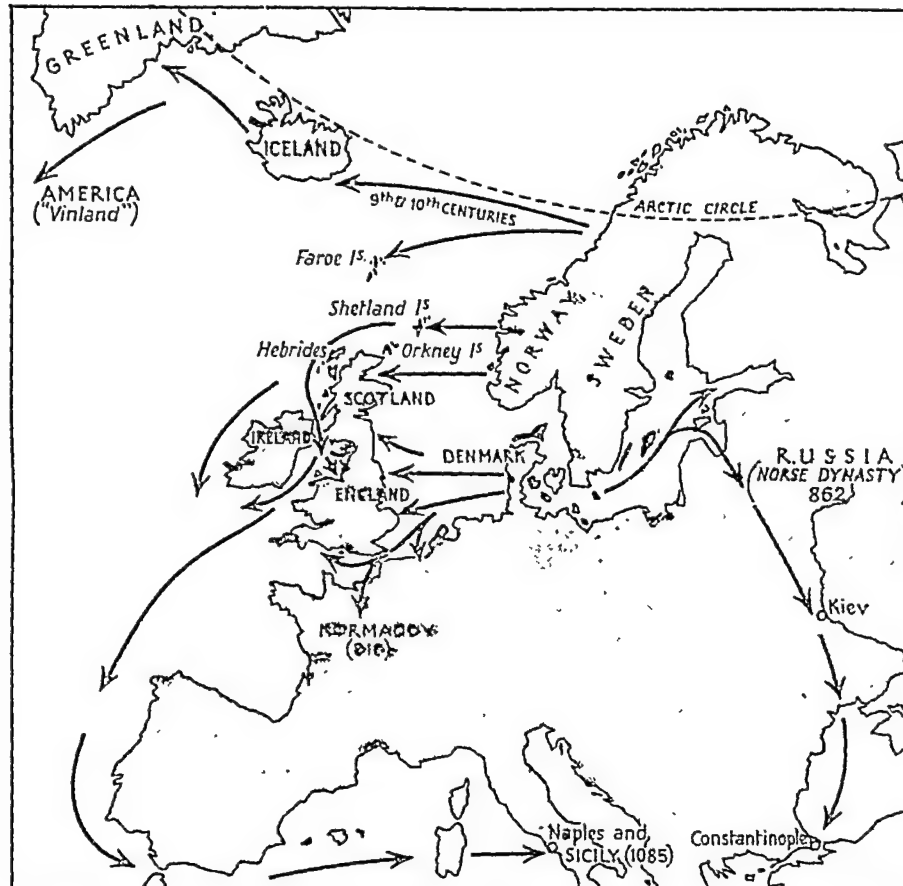
## 2. The First Danish Conquest

In an entry under the year 787 the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, describing the reign of Egbert's predecessor, states that 'in his days came first three ships of the Northmen from the land of robbers'. This is the first record of the appearance of the Danes. Not long afterwards we read of dreadful forewarnings of evils to come—whirlwinds of fiery dragons flying through the air—which terrified the people. The evil was soon upon them: 'harrowing inroads of the heathen men—lamentable havoc in the Church of God in Holy-island, by rapine and slaughter.' This passage is typical of many entries in the *Chronicle* in the next eighty years.

The Danes (Northmen, or Vikings) were a seafaring people who came from the Norwegian fiords and the neighbouring peninsula of Denmark. There is an obvious similarity between their attacks on England and those which the Anglo-Saxons had made on Roman Britain three and a half centuries earlier.

But the result was quite different ; the Danes destroyed neither the religion nor the language of the Anglo-Saxons.

Those hardy seamen, the Northmen, penetrated in small open boats to some of the farthest corners of the world. Norsemen first colonized Iceland ; and from there, under Eric the



THE NORSEMEN AND NORMANS

Red, they came to Greenland. From Greenland they reached Vinland—which was probably Labrador and in that case they were the first Europeans to set foot in North America. Nearer home, they made settlements in the Orkneys and the Hebrides ; they entered Ireland and were the founders of Dublin, Wexford, and other towns ; they made the Isle of Man their head-quarters for raids on both sides of the Irish Sea. All the coasts of Europe were subject to their attacks. Northmen founded the town of

Conquests  
of the  
Norsemen

Kiev on the Volga, and their ships even appeared before the walls of Constantinople.

It was as raiders that the Danes first came to England, where the monasteries were their favourite objects of attack. Thieving and killing went together. The abbeyes of eastern England went up in flames—as did St. Columba's on Iona and St. Patrick's near Dublin. Those few who survived the raids were left to mourn both their murdered comrades and the loss of the gold and silver that had adorned their church.

After fifty years of this terror, a worse appeared. In 851 the Danish army wintered in England for the first time and began the work of conquest in earnest. Wessex was attacked from the south, where pirate bands joined the Cornish in attacks on the coast; but it was the eastern kingdoms that suffered most severely. In spite of some help from Wessex, both Mercia and Northumbria submitted to the conqueror. In 870—it was the year before Alfred became King of Wessex—the Danes conquered East Anglia and put to death Edmund, its king. The martyrdom of the royal saint was afterwards commemorated by the foundation of the abbey of St. Edmundsbury. Wessex was now the only part of England which still resisted the Danes.

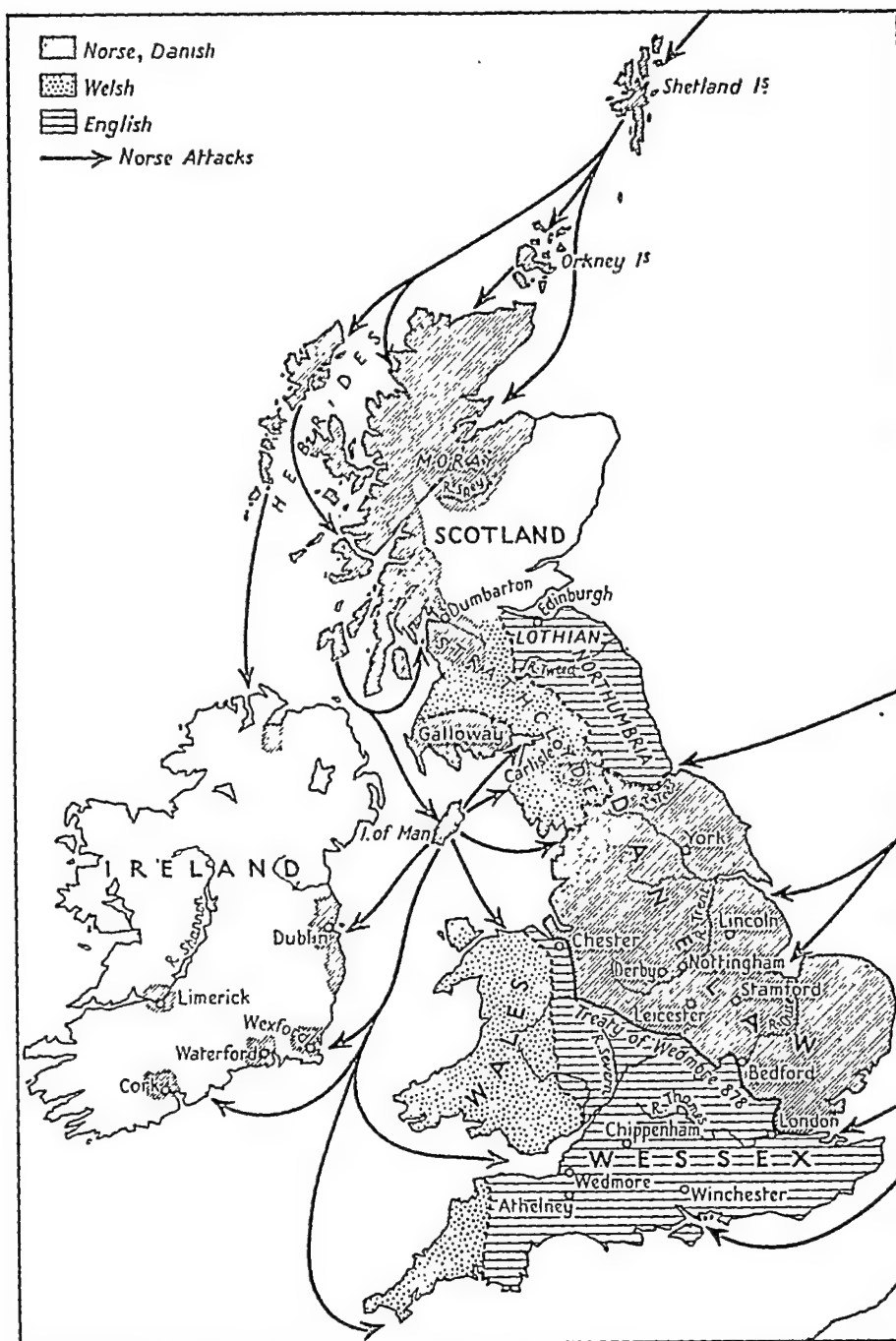
Danish  
Conquest  
begins  
851

St. Ed-  
mund, 870

### 3. *Alfred the Great*

Alfred (871-900), the grandson of Egbert, came of a short-lived house. His eldest brother had reigned for only two years. His next two brothers both died young, reigning for five years each. In 871 the Danes took Reading and encamped on the Downs above Wantage, Alfred's birthplace. His brother, King Ethelred, routed them at Ashdown, near by, but did not long survive the battle. The fortunes of Wessex and of England now depended upon King Alfred, a young man of twenty-three. The Danes were masters of Mercia and Northumbria, and they soon penetrated far into Wessex. In 876 they were at Wareham, in Dorset, where they joined hands with the Cornish. In January 878 they made a surprise attack on Chippenham, where the West Saxon army lay, and Alfred escaped with difficulty. With a few followers he fled to Somerset, where the marshes of the Parret formed a refuge.

Alfred, 871-  
900



THE BRITISH ISLES AND THE NORSE INVASIONS



Here, at Athelney,<sup>1</sup> a village raised on the mud above the surrounding waters, he defied his enemies, and lay secure through the remaining months of the winter. This was the turning-point of the struggle.

Alfred at  
Athelney

One of Alfred's great qualities was that he never despaired, even in the darkest hour; and gradually he inspired his men with his own spirit. In May he issued from his retreat, collected the men of the neighbouring shires in Wiltshire, and successfully attacked the Danes at Ethandune, near Chippen-  
ham. At last the Danish king, Guthrum, agreed to make  
peace. By the Treaty of Wedmore (878), he and Alfred divided  
England between them at the line of the Watling Street, and  
Guthrum's part—north and east of Watling Street—became  
known as the Danelaw. Guthrum promised to settle down  
peaceably in his part of the country and was baptized a  
Christian. Seven years later, Alfred had consolidated his  
position and was strong enough to make another treaty with  
the Danes by which the boundary of his kingdom was extended  
eastward and included London, which he fortified. Wessex,  
since it now included half Mercia, was larger than it had ever  
been before. The Danish conquest of Mercia and Northum-  
bria had paved the way to the union of England under the  
kings of Wessex, when they should be strong enough to re-  
conquer the Danes—as they did under Alfred's son, Edward  
the Elder.<sup>2</sup>

Ethandune  
878

Treaty of  
Wedmore

The Dane-  
law

Alfred's next care was to prepare for the defence of his kingdom. He built ships of sixty oars and more to resist the pirates from overseas; he divided the Saxon fyrd<sup>3</sup> into three parts, each of which was bound to serve a month at a time, so that at other times they could tend their farms; he also reorganized the fyrd under the leadership of the local thegns. Towards the end of Alfred's reign there was a fresh invasion from overseas; and the fact that the Danes were beaten back

Alfred's  
fleet

<sup>1</sup> It was at Athelney that the Alfred Jewel was discovered in the eighteenth century. It is made of gold, of excellent workmanship, and represents the head of a man. It bears the legend: 'Aelfred mec heht gewyrcan' ('Alfred had me wrought'). It is now in the Ashmolean Museum at Oxford.

<sup>2</sup> See next section (4).

<sup>3</sup> National army.

after a four years' struggle is proof of the wisdom and thoroughness of Alfred's defensive measures. The Danish fleet was blockaded and captured in the River Lea (896), while the Wessex fleet won a victory over some more pirates in the Channel.

An old chronicler<sup>1</sup> speaks of Alfred as 'the famous, the warlike, the victorious, the careful provider for the widow, the orphan and the poor'; and it was as a 'careful provider' for the needs of peace as well as of war that his people gratefully remembered him. He 'gathered the laws together and caused them to be written down', including those of Ethelbert of Kent and Offa of Mercia as well as of former West Saxon kings. He omitted some which he 'liked not', and softened the harshness of others.

His work in  
peace

Alfred laboured continuously for the restoration of learning in England, which had suffered terribly from nearly a century of war and invasion. He founded schools, he restored monasteries; and, since there were not enough scholars in England to serve the needs of education, he sent for more from France and Germany. For the benefit of his subjects, he translated several important books from Latin into English himself.<sup>2</sup> Alfred the Great, the Truth-Teller, like all his house, died comparatively young; he was only fifty-two when he ended his labours, in the year 900. He was buried at Winchester, the West Saxon capital.

Education

Death of  
Alfred, 900

#### 4. *The Saxon Monarchy*

The century from Alfred's Peace of Wedmore (878) to the accession of Ethelred the Redeless (978) has been called the Golden Age of the Saxons. The work of uniting England under the West Saxon monarchy, which involved the reconquest of the Danelaw, was completed by about 955. Alfred's forefathers had been kings of Wessex merely; his grandsons and their successors were kings of England.<sup>3</sup>

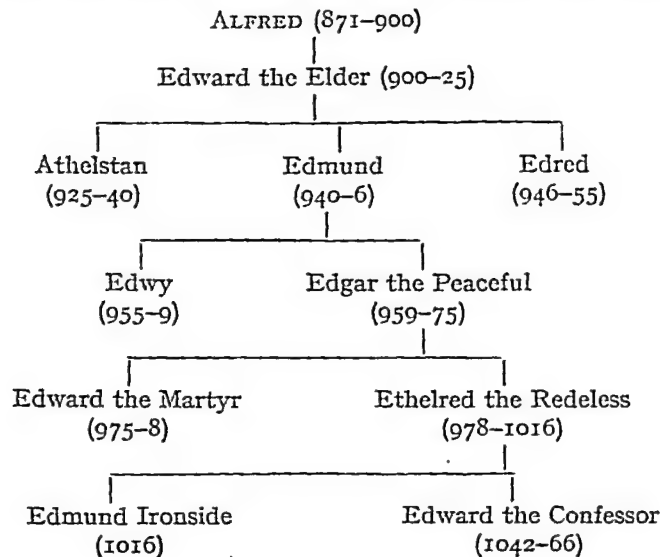
<sup>1</sup> Florence of Worcester.

<sup>2</sup> The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, the basis of our knowledge of early English history, was begun about this time, possibly by Alfred's orders.

<sup>3</sup> See table on opposite page.

Alfred's son and successor was that warlike king, Edward the Elder (900-925), who was ably supported by his no less warlike sister, Ethelfleda, Lady of the Mercians. After her husband's death Ethelfleda carried on the war against the Danes with undiminished vigour, and she reduced the 'Five Boroughs' (Lincoln, Stamford, Nottingham, Derby, and Leicester) which had been settled by the Danes after their first conquest. She lived in royal state at Tamworth Castle and she died there. Her brother continued her work of building and fortifying 'burhs' against the Danes. In these 'burhs' we see the origin of the towns which gave their names to and became the capitals of the new midland shires that Edward the Elder formed. The shires of Wessex, which are much earlier, were tribal lands (e.g. Berkshire, Wiltshire) and were not named after a burh, whereas the midland shires take their names from the county towns—Bedford, Hertford, Huntingdon, Cambridge, Leicester, Derby, Nottingham, Stafford, Warwick. When Edward the Elder died, the Danclaw up to the Humber had been reconquered, and the Danes were settling down under their West Saxon master.

Three of Edward's sons reigned after him; the eldest, Athelstan (925-40), was the first man who could fairly claim to be



King of England, for he conquered Danish Northumbria and thus united the country under one rule. He did, indeed, assume the high-sounding title of King of Britain; and the *Chronicle* says that he 'governed all the kings that were in this island'—the King of West Wales (Cornwall), the King of the Scots, the King of Monmouth, and the King of Northumbria. Constantine, King of Scots, 'the crafty one', afterwards raised an allied army of Scots, Danes, Welsh, and Britons (of Strathclyde) to fight Athelstan, but the English utterly defeated it at Brunanburh (937).<sup>1</sup>

Edred and  
his nephews

Athelstan was followed by Edmund (940–6), who was murdered by a robber in his own banqueting hall. Edred, his younger brother, reigned next, in preference to the young sons of Edmund. The passing over of the heir, on the grounds that he was too young to rule, was usual in those turbulent times, the decision being taken by the Witan.<sup>2</sup> On Edred's death, his two nephews, Edwy and Edgar, divided the kingdom between them; but Edwy lived only another four years, after which the land was united under the sixteen years' rule of Edgar.

Edgar the  
Peaceful  
959–75

The reign of Edgar the Peaceful (959–75) is mainly remembered for his choice of St. Dunstan as his chief adviser. Dunstan had had a chequered life. He was born near Glastonbury, and was the son of a wealthy thegn. It was in his father's hall that Dunstan first acquired his passion for music, and he used to carry his harp about with him wherever he went. Then he was sent as a page to the court of Athelstan; but he disliked court life, decided to become a monk, and entered Glastonbury Abbey. Dunstan was an eager reader, and at Glastonbury he came in contact with the Irish monks, who used to travel about England bringing their precious manuscripts with them. There also he was able to indulge his artistic tastes to the full, and he soon became famed for his skill as a goldsmith. There are many stories connected with St. Dunstan, particularly in regard to his alleged encounters with the Devil in person. At Mayfield Palace, Sussex, an old residence of the Archbishops of Canterbury, they still show you the celebrated tongs with which he is said to have pinched the Devil's nose.

St. Dunstan

Dunstan was recalled to court by King Edmund, who made

<sup>1</sup> Perhaps Burnswark on the Solway.

<sup>2</sup> See above, p. 35.

him Abbot of Glastonbury when he was scarcely twenty. Edgar, Edmund's son, was his lifelong friend. Dunstan was made in turn Bishop of Worcester and Bishop of London, and lastly Archbishop of Canterbury (960), a position which he held for nearly thirty years, during which he played a leading part in both Church and State—the first of the great clerical statesmen of medieval England.

Dunstan  
Archbishop  
960

Dunstan's rule at Glastonbury was the beginning of a much-needed monastic reform in England. He had spent his exile abroad at one of the sister abbeys of the famous Cluny in Burgundy. Cluny<sup>1</sup> had become the centre of a monastic reform which spread throughout Europe. Dunstan, on his return, encouraged this reformation in England. Under its influence most of the abbey churches in England came under the rule of the monks, while all the monasteries were reformed in discipline. The Rule of St. Benedict was strictly enforced, the monks being obliged to perform their seven services a day, besides giving four hours to study and six hours to manual work. These reforms had a healthy influence for a time, though unfortunately another age of war and violence, which followed Dunstan's death, undid much of his good work.

Monastic  
Reform

Dunstan undoubtedly had much to do with the prosperity of Edgar's reign—a reign so peaceful that the Saxon chronicler has little to say about it. He mentions the 'six kings' who met Edgar at Chester and swore to be his allies 'by sea and by land'. According to a later chronicler these were the kings (eight in this story)<sup>2</sup> who rowed Edgar across the Dee, while he sat in state in the prow of the barge.

King Edgar died in 975; Dunstan survived him thirteen years. He lived long enough to prophesy the calamities which would befall the realm under Edgar's sons. Edgar was succeeded by his young son Edward (the Martyr) who reigned for three years; then he was murdered at Coryates (Dorset) by Elfrida, his step-mother. Elfrida's ambition, that her own son should be king, was thus accomplished; the boy Ethelred, aged ten, was then crowned at Kingston-on-Thames.

Edward the  
Martyr  
975-8

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter V, Sect. 1.

<sup>2</sup> The King of Scots, the King of Cumberland, the Viking King of Man, and five Welsh kings.

Ethelred  
the Rede-  
less, 978-  
1016

The Danes  
come again

Danegeld

Confusion  
in England

Massacre of  
St. Brice's  
Day, 1002

Thirty-six out of the thirty-eight years (978-1016) of the reign of Ethelred the 'Redeless' ('Lacking in Counsel') were overcast by fresh Danish raids and invasions. The raids began (980) when some pirate crews landed in Dorset. Thereafter the *Chronicle* becomes a melancholy record of disaster. The pirate ships harried all the coasts, sailed up the rivers, and reduced the countryside to terror. Places as far apart as Bamburgh, Ipswich, Canterbury, Exeter, and Bath are mentioned as being plundered; the enemy penetrated as far inland as Oxford. London was the only place that made an effective defence. The king decided to pay tribute to the Danes, to try to induce them to leave England in peace. This tribute was raised by a direct tax on the people, called Danegeld,<sup>1</sup> and it was levied six times during the reign—an eloquent testimony to the fact that it only encouraged the enemy to come again. The total amount paid in Danegeld in Ethelred's reign was 158,000 pounds of silver (about £8,500,000 in modern money), raised from a country of under three million inhabitants.

Some towns, particularly London, put up a good fight against the Danish inroads; but a fearful paralysis gripped the whole country. What was lacking was a leader. In the *Chronicle* we read a story of wasted effort, of armies assembled but never put into action. 'Often was an army collected against them; but as soon as they were about to come together then were they ever through something or other put to flight and their enemies always in the end had the victory.'<sup>2</sup> An example of the king's lack of settled policy is shown by the *Chronicle's* entries for the year 1002, which begin: 'This year the king and his council agreed that tribute should be given to the [Danish] fleet and peace made with them, with the provision that they should desist from their mischief.' But the very same year, on St. Brice's Day (1002), Ethelred ordered the massacre of the Danes settled in Wessex, and one of the

<sup>1</sup> This experiment of direct taxation proved so useful to the Crown that Danegeld was later levied by Canute, the Danish king of England, who obviously did not want it for its original purpose. It was also levied by William the Conqueror and his successors, when all danger from the Danes had disappeared.

<sup>2</sup> *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, Year 998.

victims was the sister of Sweyn Forkbeard, King of Denmark. Sweyn Forkbeard himself now became the chief director of the Danish raids. He was a son of the Christian Harold Blue-Tooth, but he had slain his father in battle, and turned pagan. In 1013 he brought his son Canute to England, and in the same year King Ethelred fled to Normandy, taking with him his Norman wife Emma and her young sons. Thereupon most of England submitted to Sweyn; but one day early in the next year he fell shrieking from his horse and expired in torment—men said he was struck down by the hand of God.

Canute was now King of Denmark, and intended to be King of England as well. Ethelred returned from Normandy (1014), only to die two years later. The war continued: Edmund Ironside, Ethelred's eldest son, raised an army in East Anglia—the first, but not the last, Ironside to do so. But Canute defeated him at Assandune in Essex (1016), owing, it is said, to the treachery of an English earl, Edric Streona, who had betrayed his countrymen before. Canute and Edmund now agreed to divide the kingdom between them—as Guthrum and Alfred had previously done. But that winter Edmund Ironside died—he may have been murdered—and the hopes of England died with him. Submission to Canute was the only course left, and the Witan chose him as King of England.

### 5. *The Second Danish Conquest*

Canute's reign of nearly twenty years (1016–35) began with numerous murders, and one of Ethelred's surviving sons was among the victims. But he grew pious as he became older, adopted the Christian religion, founded monasteries instead of burning them, and went on a pilgrimage to Rome.

There is one passage in the *Chronicle* which illustrates the great change in the king's behaviour. Canute, 'the illustrious king', accompanied by the chief bishops and earls, was present when the corpse of Archbishop Alphege was moved from St. Paul's to Canterbury. Now St. Alphege had been taken prisoner by some Danes eleven years before, mocked at during their drunken feast, pelted with ox bones, and then brutally murdered. But those days are past; and a different scene is

being enacted. It is summer, and the doors of the church at St. Alphege Canterbury are open to receive the martyr's bones; the queen and her son are come to meet the procession, 'and they all with much majesty and bliss and songs of praise carried the holy archbishop into Canterbury, and so brought him gloriously into the church, on the third day before the Ides of June'. Both sides of the medieval picture are presented in the story of St. Alphege, both the cruelty and the piety; and the violent contrast, so typical of the Middle Ages. First, the victim, the bloody ox bones, the jeering crowd, merciful death: then the martyr, the Cross, the chanting monks, the holy tomb. One cannot help wondering whether there were some Danes who played a part in both scenes. But it was not only the Danes who were alternately savages and pilgrims.

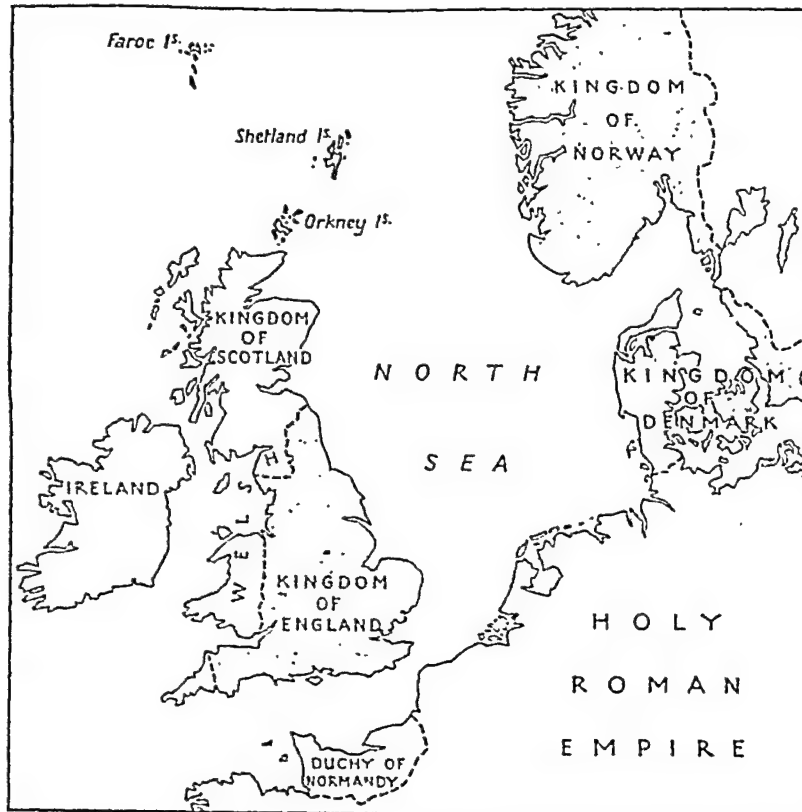
Canute strengthened his position in England by marrying Emma of Normandy, the widow of Ethelred. He divided England among four great earls to rule the country when he was absent; and the most trusted of these was Godwine, Earl of Wessex. Abroad, Canute was a powerful monarch; his accession to the thrones of England and Denmark (1016) was followed twelve years later by his conquest of Norway. One may well speculate what would have been the course of history had his successors been strong enough to maintain this great northern maritime empire.

Canute was evidently liked by his English subjects, and his peaceful rule was soon so firmly established that he was able to send the greater part of the Danish fleet and army home. It was paid off by means of the Danegeld. Canute, however, maintained a small standing army of royal body-guards, known as 'housecarls', warriors bound by a tie of personal service to the king. These served to keep the local chieftains in order and to make them obey the English laws which Canute re-enacted.

When Canute died (1035) he was succeeded as King of Denmark by his eldest son, Sweyn, while England was divided between two other sons, Harold Harefoot and Hardicanute. But when Sweyn died shortly afterwards, Hardicanute became King of Denmark, and seemed not to trouble about England. So 'men chose Harold king over all, and forsook Hardicanute, because he was too long in Denmark'. Then Hardicanute invaded



England, only to find Harold Harefoot dead on his arrival (1040). He thereupon assumed authority over the whole kingdom. Another two years passed, and then . . . 'this year died King



CANUTE'S EMPIRE

Hardicanute at Lambeth, as he stood drinking'. So ended the short and inglorious reigns of Canute's sons (1042).

The Golden Age of the Saxons had ended with Edgar and Dunstan. The calamities of the long reign of Ethelred the Redeless had ushered in the second Danish conquest. And the Danish element has remained in our history, our dialects, and our blood. The names of many places in the eastern counties attest their Danish origin.<sup>1</sup> The Danes also introduced

The last of  
the Danish  
kings, 1042

Danish  
influences

<sup>1</sup> In Lincolnshire, names ending in *-by*, meaning homestead or township (as in 'by-law' or town law), are thick on the map, e.g. Grimsby,

a new division of land for purposes of administration. Wapentakes corresponded to hundreds and they often bear Danish names, e.g. in Yorkshire Hallikeld, Holderness, and Agbrigg. Another Danish innovation was the division of Yorkshire into *ridings* (third parts), which still survive.

A Norse  
Colony

About the same time as the Danes of eastern England were submitting to Edward the Elder and his sons, another Norse colony was being formed. This was the settlement in Cumberland, Westmorland, and Lancashire of Norwegians from the Isle of Man and Ireland. In the Lake District a mountain is called a *fell*, and a lake a *tarn*, both Norwegian names. The Norwegians also penetrated into the Danelaw; Normanby or Normanton (= village of the Norwegians) is a name found in Yorkshire and in five other counties.<sup>1</sup>

Importance  
of the  
Thegns

Under the stress of the Danish wars a great change had been hastened in the social life of England. The need for organization is always more felt in time of war than in peace. In war-time the paramount need is for protection; and, during the Danish wars, the thegns naturally rose in importance. The thegns were the king's warriors whose duty it was to defend the realm: they also became the lords of the peasants.<sup>2</sup> The free *ceorl* began to lose his independence: he became the tiller of the soil, and almost as low in the scale as the word 'churl' suggests. Even before the Norman Conquest it is probable that the *ceorl* had sunk to the status of a villein, and was compelled to work on his lord's land.

Another development followed the reconquest of the Danelaw by Edward the Elder and his son. The whole country was

Coningsby, Spilsby; and similar towns are also to be found as far inland as Ashby and Rugby. Another Danish name for a homestead was *toft* (e.g. Lowestoft); the name *thorp*, so common in Norfolk and Suffolk, meant a hamlet, an offshoot of an original settlement, as in Burnham Thorpe, while *wick* meant a creek or bay, as in Berwick. The Danish name *thwaite* (i.e. meadow) is also common in Yorkshire.

<sup>1</sup> Lincolnshire, Derbyshire, Leicestershire, Nottinghamshire, and Rutland.

<sup>2</sup> Thus gradually arose the system known as *Feudalism*, which was more fully developed after the Norman Conquest. It would perhaps be truer to say that we know more about it after the Conquest. The question of how far Feudalism was developed under the Saxons is one of much controversy among scholars.

divided into large districts formed of groups of shires, each placed under the command of an earl (the Danish name for the Saxon 'ealdorman'). The earl thus became an important magnate, while the shires were administered under him by the sheriff. This system was continued by Canute, and by the time of the last Saxon king, Edward the Confessor, the power of the earls had become dangerous. Large earldoms

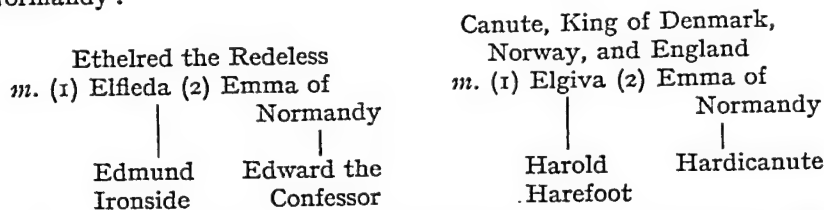
### 6. *Edward the Confessor*

On the death of Hardicanute the Witan chose his half-brother Edward,<sup>1</sup> the last of Ethelred's sons, to be king of England. Edward the Confessor, as he was afterwards called, reigned for twenty-four years (1042-66). When he came to the throne he was a man of about thirty-seven. He had spent all his life in Normandy, his mother's country, for which he had a great affection—a fact which had a fateful influence on English history. He was a man of great piety, and so he is the hero of the monastic chroniclers. He founded the first Westminster Abbey,<sup>2</sup> which was completed just before his death and 'hallowed' on Christmas Day, 1065. Edward the Confessor 1042-66

But the pious king was also somewhat simple-minded; he lacked the force of intellect and will wherewith to grasp the reins of government, which fell from his nerveless hands into those of stronger men. There were two parties in the state: the king's favourites who were all Normans, and the party of Earl Godwine, the 'national' party, which stood for England—and for Earl Godwine.

Godwine was an able man whom Canute had made Earl of Wessex. Under the Confessor, the possessions of his family Earl Godwine

<sup>1</sup> Hardicanute and Edward the Confessor were both sons of Emma of Normandy:



<sup>2</sup> The Confessor's building was pulled down by Henry III, who built the present Abbey.

were largely increased. Godwine himself was Earl of Wessex, which now embraced all England south of the Thames; his eldest son Sweyn was given an earldom—the Severn valley; his second son Harold was made Earl of East Anglia. Finally, Beorn, his nephew, was made Earl of the midland shires of Derby, Nottingham, Leicester, and Lincoln. These arrangements considerably reduced the power of Leofric, Earl of Mercia, and made the Godwine family supreme over a great part of England. The Confessor disliked and feared Godwine—nevertheless, or perhaps for that very reason, he married Godwine's daughter.

The Norman party

The Norman party was headed by Robert, Abbot of Jumièges—the first Norman bishop in England. He was made Bishop of London and then Archbishop of Canterbury. Another Norman, Richard Scrob, built the first castle in England, much superior to the Saxon burh. These men, and other bishops and nobles of Norman birth, were the favourites of Edward the Confessor. It is one of the ironies of history that the English, when they were ruled by Norman kings, looked back to the days of 'good King Edward' as to a time when they had their own laws and their own king. But, in truth, the holy king did as much to promote the Norman Conquest as any man.

a

In 1051 Count Eustace of Boulogne, who had married Edward's sister, paid a visit to England. He behaved badly on his departure, and there was fighting between his followers and the men of Dover. Hearing of this, King Edward ordered Earl Godwine to punish the offending townspeople; but Godwine stoutly refused to do so. All the earl's hostility to the Norman favourites was behind this refusal; he took an angry leave of the king, and prepared to raise a rebellion. But Leofric and Siward,<sup>1</sup> the earls of Mercia and Northumbria respectively, who were jealous of Godwine's power, rallied to the king's side. The position looked dangerous; but Godwine would not trust to the issue of civil war, and he and all his family fled to Flanders. It was during Godwine's exile, and

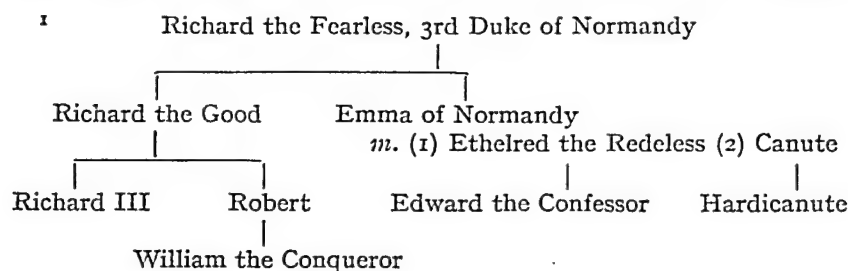
Godwine in exile

<sup>1</sup> Leofric was the husband of Lady Godiva, and the grandfather of Earls Edwin and Morcar, who failed to support Harold in 1066. Siward appears in Shakespeare's *Macbeth*.

the consequent triumph of the Norman party, that William, the seventh Duke of Normandy, paid a visit to King Edward, his second cousin.<sup>1</sup>

Norman power had begun a century and a half earlier with the settlement (910) of some Norse pirates at the mouth of the Seine. Rollo, the first duke, and his followers, were just pagan Norse adventurers. But their successors, while retaining all the fighting qualities and much of the savagery of the Norsemen, also absorbed the Christianity of France and its civilization—the foremost of that age. The Norman knights were famous fighters; their leaders were men of enterprise. Duke William was not the only Norman conqueror of this period. His countryman, Robert Guiscard, was at this time carving out a dukedom for himself in south Italy—the foundation of the later Norman kingdom of Naples and Sicily. In Normandy, Lanfranc, Prior of Bec, was busy reforming the Church after the model of Cluny<sup>2</sup>; while the massive Norman architecture, later to become so familiar in England, was producing splendid abbeys, churches, and castles.

Duke William was one of the outstanding figures of that age. His ancestor Duke Richard had helped Hugh Capet<sup>3</sup> to become King of France (987), and the Norman dukes had been close allies of Hugh Capet's successors. But by William's time the Duke of Normandy was too secure in his own dominions and too powerful a vassal to be a useful ally to the French Crown. Practically independent of the King of France, his own feudal overlord, William nevertheless sternly repressed all the efforts of his Norman barons to assert their own independence. While yet a boy he crushed the revolt of his barons at Val-ès-dunes



<sup>2</sup> See below, Chapter V.

<sup>3</sup> The Capetian Dynasty lasted in France till the French Revolution.

(1047); and they ever afterwards feared and respected him. By training William was a Christian and a Frenchman, but in some respects he was 'the most terrible, as he was the last, outcome of the northern race. The very spirit of the "seawolves" who had so long lived on the pillage of the world seemed embodied in his gigantic form, his enormous strength, his savage countenance, his desperate bravery, the fury of his wrath, the ruthlessness of his revenge.'<sup>1</sup>

The duke was a welcome visitor at the so-called English court, where the king was surrounded by his Normans. It is fairly certain that the childless Edward then recognized William as the heir to his kingdom, although he had no right to do this, for William had no valid claim to the English throne. But after the duke's departure there was a reaction against the Normans. Godwine reappeared with a fleet in the Thames; at a meeting of the Witan he was restored to his earldom, and the Norman favourites were outlawed.

Earl Godwine died shortly after his restoration to power, and his son Harold became Earl of Wessex. Harold Godwinson was the real ruler of England during the remaining thirteen years of Edward's reign; and nearly all the chief earldoms were held by him and his brothers. Towards the end of the reign Harold had the misfortune to be shipwrecked off the Norman coast, and was taken to William's court. Here, in return for liberty, he was made to swear an oath to the duke, the nature of which is somewhat obscure; but either he swore to be William's vassal, or he promised to support the duke's claim to the English throne; in either case he broke his oath.

Harold's brother Tostig had been made Earl of Northumbria on Siward's death. Against Tostig there was a rebellion (1065), and as a result the earldom was transferred to Morcar, brother of Edwin, Earl of Mercia. Tostig fled overseas, vowing vengeance on Harold, who, he said, had failed to support him. His revenge (as we shall see) cost him his life, and England her liberty.

30 England and Scotland, 9th and 10th centuries

### 7. *The Making of Scotland*

At the beginning of this chapter we saw how England, divided into three warring kingdoms, fell a prey to the invading

<sup>1</sup> J. R. Green.

Danes; and then how, under Alfred and his descendants, the Danish territory was reconquered and the kingdom of England



SCOTLAND IN THE DARK AGES

united under one ruler. The story of the sister kingdom of Scotland,<sup>1</sup> as this section will show, was strangely similar.

Scotland is naturally divided into three parts—the Highlands,

<sup>1</sup> Scotland did not receive its present name till the tenth century of the Christian era.

Highlands and Lowlands the Central Lowlands, and the Southern Uplands. The Highlands rise north-west of a line drawn roughly from the mouth of the Clyde to Aberdeen and include the most magnificent mountain scenery in the British Isles. The Central Lowlands consist of a broad plain (including the whole of modern industrial Scotland) stretching from Aberdeen to Ayrshire. The third region, the Southern Uplands, is so mountainous as to make invasion from England very difficult, except by the coastal route from Berwick-on-Tweed. The Romans made an attempt—not a successful one—to incorporate the land south of the Firth of Forth into their province of Britain.

Four peoples in Scotland What is now Scotland had become, by the middle of the sixth century, the home of four distinct peoples. First, the Picts held the greater part of the country north of the Forth. Secondly, the Scots, invaders from Ireland, settled in Argyllshire and the neighbouring islands, and formed the kingdom of Dalriata. Thirdly, the English, who settled the North Sea coast, colonized the district of Lothian, between the Forth and the Tweed, which is now part of Scotland but which was then part of the kingdom of Bernicia.<sup>1</sup> Lastly, the Britons, driven by the English from the east coast, held the kingdom of Strathclyde or Cumbria, which then extended from the Clyde to the Mersey. The capital of Strathclyde was first at Dumbarton (i.e. Fortress of the Britons) and then at Carlisle. These diverse elements—Pict, Scot, Briton, and English—were in time joined to form the kingdom of Scotland.

The first step in this process was the union of the Picts and Scots. This event was hastened by the raids of the Norsemen, which, as in England, began in the last years of the eighth century. The pirates singled out for plunder the monasteries, which were often built on or near the coast; Iona was sacked in 795. At last (839) the power of the Picts was shattered in a battle in which the Norsemen slew the Pictish king and a great number of his warriors. But the overthrow of the Pictish kingdom enabled Kenneth MacAlpin, King of Dalriata, to unite his country with Pictland (843). The union thus formed was never afterwards broken.

Union of  
Picts and  
Scots, 843

<sup>1</sup> Bernicia was afterwards united with Deira (Yorkshire) to form the kingdom of Northumbria.



But Kenneth and his successors were powerless to stem the Norse advance. Before the end of the ninth century the invaders had conquered the Orkneys and Shetlands, the Hebrides, and the northern part of the mainland of Scotland, as far as the province of Moray, on the southern shore of the Moray Firth. At the same time other Norsemen overran the valley of the Clyde and took Dumbarton. The capital of the British kingdom was now moved south to Carlisle.

Norse  
Conquests

At the beginning of the tenth century the tide began to turn. In Scotland the Norsemen made no further conquests; in England they were fighting a losing battle against Edward the Elder and his sons. As we have seen, Athelstan defeated the Danes of Northumbria<sup>1</sup> and his brother Edmund drove them out of Strathclyde. Unable, however, to hold this distant province, Edmund committed the task of its defence to the King of Scotland, Malcolm I, who thus became overlord of Strathclyde.<sup>2</sup>

English  
victories in  
the north

The southern movement of the Scots continued; in 962 Indulf, successor of Malcolm I, made himself master of Edinburgh. The opening years of the eleventh century, which saw the second Danish conquest of England, were much more fortunate for Scotland. The death of Sigurd, the Norse Jarl of Orkney (1014), who had also ruled over northern Scotland, resulted in his territories on the mainland coming under the sway of the King of Scots, Malcolm II (1005-34). It was this same Malcolm who acquired the province of Lothian, down to the river Tweed, from the Earl of Northumberland and who, when King Canute tried to retake the province, won the decisive battle of Carham (1018). Since Carham the boundary of England and Scotland has been fixed at the Tweed. In the same year as this victory Owen the Bald, last British king of Strathclyde, died; he was succeeded by Duncan, grandson and heir of King Malcolm.<sup>3</sup> When Duncan succeeded Malcolm

Edinburgh  
962

Malcolm II  
(1005-34)

Carham  
1018

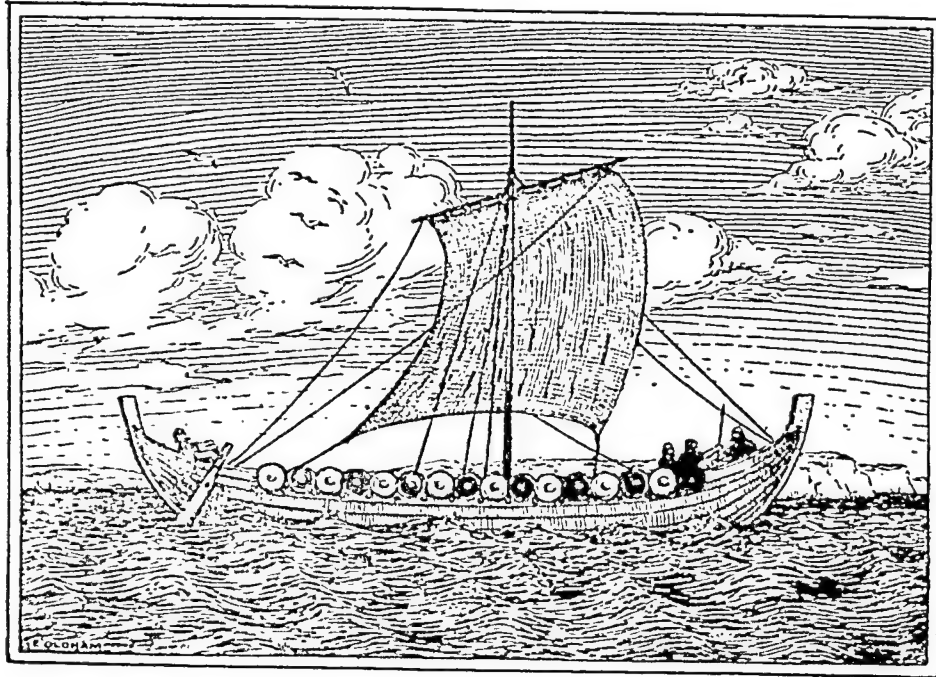
<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 60.

<sup>2</sup> But the Britons of Strathclyde obeyed their own native kings till 1018.

<sup>3</sup> Strathclyde, at the time of its annexation to Scotland, included Cumberland. The attempt of the Scottish kings to retain Cumberland in their dominions was foiled by the vigorous policy of William Rufus, who built the fortress of Carlisle (1092).

Union of all  
Scotland  
1034

(1034) Pict, Scot, Briton, Norseman, and the settlers of the English race north of the Tweed were united under one ruler. But this loose confederacy of peoples had yet to be welded together to form the Scottish nation.



'In his days came first three ships of the Northmen from the land of robbers' (see p. 53). A Viking ship crossing the sea. The drawing is based on an actual ship (the Gokstad ship) unearthed in a Scandinavian burial mound. The ship is long and narrow and low, with no deck. An exact model of this ship was built in 1893, and crossed the Atlantic in four weeks, using sail alone, which proves her seaworthiness. The Viking ships drew very little water, and so could be easily beached. They were brilliantly painted, their sails were striped, and along the gunwale hung the many-coloured shields of the warriors. They carried about 50 men.

## DATE SUMMARY: SAXON PERIOD

EVENTS IN BRITISH ISLES	CHIEF SAXON AND DANISH KINGS	EVENTS IN EUROPE AND ASIA
	FIFTH CENTURY	
<i>c.</i> 450-500 <i>Anglo-Saxon Settlement</i>		410 Goths sack Rome
<i>c.</i> 460 St. Patrick <i>d.</i>		455 Vandals sack Rome
		476 <i>Last Western Emperor</i>
	SIXTH CENTURY	
<i>c.</i> 540 Gildas		527-65 Emp. Justinian
563 St. Columba at Iona		543 St. Benedict <i>d.</i>
577 ✕ Deorham	Ethelbert of Kent (560-616)	
597 St. Augustine in Kent		590-604 Pope Gregory the Great
	SEVENTH CENTURY	
<i>Northumbrian Supremacy</i>		
613 Capture of Chester	Edwin of Northumbria (617-33)	632 Mahomet <i>d.</i>
635 Aidan in Northumbria		
664 Synod of Whitby	Penda of Mercia (626-55)	
668-90 Archbp. Theodore		
<i>Mercian Supremacy</i>	EIGHTH CENTURY	
735 Bede <i>d.</i>		711 Moslems enter Spain
Offa's Dyke	Ethelbald of Mercia (716-57)	
W. Saxons conquer Somerset and Devon	Offa of Mercia (757-96)	
787 First Danish raids		786-809 Haroun-al-Raschid ( <i>Arabian Nights</i> )
	NINTH CENTURY	
<i>Wessex Supremacy</i>		800 Charlemagne, 'Emperor of the Romans'
825 ✕ Ellandune	Egbert of Wessex (802-39)	
844 <i>Kenneth MacAlpin, first King of Scotland</i>		
851 Danes winter in England		
870 Martyrdom of St. Edmund	Alfred the Great (871-900)	
878 ✕ Ethandune and Treaty of Wedmore		
	TENTH CENTURY	
937 ✕ Brunanburh	Edward the Elder (900-25)	885 Viking siege of Paris
	Athelstan (925-40)	910 Cluniac revival
960-88 Dunstan Archbp.		910 Duchy of Normandy founded
980 Danish raids begin	Edgar the Peaceful (959-75)	962 Otto, King of Germany, <i>Holy Roman Emperor</i>
	Ethelred the Redeless (978-1016)	
	ELEVENTH CENTURY	
1002 Massacre of St. Brice's Day	Canute (1016-35)	1035-87 William, Duke of Normandy
1016 Edmund Ironside <i>d.</i>	Edward the Confessor (1042-66)	
1051 Earl Godwine exiled	Harold (1066)	
1066 Norman Conquest		

## DATE SUMMARY: BRITAIN AND THE NORSEMEN

## SCOTLAND

## ENGLAND

## NINTH CENTURY (NORSE ADVANCE)

- c. 800 Norse raids  
 839 *Overthrow of Pictish Kingdom* by Norsemen  
 843 Union of PICTS and SCOTS under Kenneth MacAlpin  
  
 850-900 Norsemen conquer the Hebrides, Orkneys, and Shetlands, and northern portion of mainland of Scotland, as far as Moray Firth

- c. 800 Danish raids

## FIRST DANISH CONQUEST

- 850-70 Conquest of all eastern England  
 878 *Treaty of Wedmore*. England divided between Danes and Alfred the Great  
 Norwegian settlement in Cumberland

## TENTH CENTURY (NORSE DECLINE)

- 900-40 Reconquest of Danelaw by Edward the Elder and Athelstan  
 Edmund (940-6) drives Norsemen from Strathclyde (945)  
 945 Malcolm I acquires overlordship of Strathclyde from King Edmund of England  
 962 Indulf takes Edinburgh

## ELEVENTH CENTURY

- 1014 Sigurd, Norse Jarl of Orkney *d.* His territories on mainland of Scotland pass to King of Scotland  
  
 1018 ✕ Carham. Malcolm II acquires Lothian from Earl of Northumbria  
 1018 Last British king of Strathclyde *d.* He is succeeded by Duncan (grandson of Malcolm II) who in  
 1034 becomes King of all Scotland

## SECOND DANISH CONQUEST

- 1016-42 Danish kings

## IV

### THE NORMANS

#### I. *The Norman Conquest*

IN January 1066 the Confessor died. The Witan, disregarding the claims of Edgar the Atheling, a grandson of Edmund Ironside, chose Earl Harold to be King of England; and Harold, in spite of his oath to William, accepted the crown.

Harold II,  
King, 1066

During the summer of 1066 Duke William made his preparations for the invasion of England, and how he did so is shown in the lively pictures of the Bayeux Tapestry (see p. 79). His claim to the crown was a fairly strong one. First he was, he said, the Confessor's acknowledged heir, and therefore he came to England merely to claim his own. Secondly, he denounced Harold as a usurper and an oath-breaker. Thirdly, he came with the banner of St. Peter—which floated in the van at Hastings—and the Pope's blessing. Stigand, Archbishop of Canterbury, had been a supporter of the anti-Pope. The true Pope accordingly issued a Bull (or Edict) declaring that Harold was a usurper and that William was the rightful king of England. William therefore invaded England with the object of deposing not only Harold but also Stigand.

William's  
prepara-  
tions

At the time that the Norman fleet was almost ready, the fleet of Harold Hardrada, King of Norway, was also preparing to invade the realm of Harold of England. This Hardrada, a giant of seven feet, had been a famous Viking who had sailed the seas from the Arctic regions to Constantinople. His fleet of 300 galleys sailed up the Yorkshire Ouse, and his army disembarked (Aug. 1066). Tostig, back from his exile, joined forces with Hardrada, whose army defeated (20 September) the Earls of Northumbria and Mercia at Fulford, near York, which Hardrada occupied. Harold was therefore obliged to leave the south and go north. He defeated the invaders at the bloody battle of Stamford Bridge (25 September), where both Tostig and Hardrada were slain. Three days later William of Normandy landed (28 September) on the coast of Sussex at

Hardrada's  
Invasion  
and  
Tostig's  
Rebellion

Fulford and  
Stamford  
Bridge,  
25 Sept.  
1066

Pevensey. Thus the Viking raid and the action of a treacherous brother meant that Harold and his army had to march along Ermine Street from London to York, fight a fierce battle, and then back again from York to London. The army accomplished each of these remarkable marches of 200 miles in nine days. Harold left instructions for Earls Edwin and Morcar to follow him south with reinforcements. But the earls never appeared.

Sussex in 1066 was not the same as present-day Sussex. Neither the long flat coast from Hastings to Eastbourne, nor the flat meadows behind it, existed. Instead, there was a coastline broken up by many river estuaries and wide bays, which have since silted up, while the country behind was marshy and difficult to cross. Skirting the marshes, William made for Hastings, which he took and fortified. He was now in a very strong position, owing to the fact that the estuaries of the Brede and the Bulverhythe made the land round Hastings a peninsula, only approachable from the north. In this strong position William waited for the English army. It appeared on the evening of 13 October, and took up a position on the hill where the ruins of Battle Abbey now stand.

William at  
Hastings

The flower of Harold's army consisted of his housecarls and the thegns of Wessex, who locked their shields together to form a shield-wall and so held the centre of the hill. On either side of them was the Wessex fyrd, called up from their fields with such weapons as they could find. William had the advantage of archers and of cavalry—knights clad in ring-mail who fought on horseback (which the English had not yet learnt to do).

Hastings,  
Oct. 1066

At dawn on 14 October William brought his Normans on to the opposite hill (Telham Hill) and decided to attack. The battle lasted all day. It was begun three hours after daylight by a volley of arrows. The minstrel, Taillefer, was the first Norman to advance, singing the famous 'Song of Roland' which tells of the deeds of Charlemagne's peerless knight:

Man for his lord should suffer with good heart . . .  
His blood let drain and all his flesh be scarred . . .

and he was the first Norman to fall.



#### THE COMING OF THE NORMANS

Part of the Bayeux Tapestry, showing the building of William's castle at Hastings (*castellum at Hestenga*) in October 1066. The pioneers are digging the ditch and throwing the earth up to make the mound or 'motte' (see also p. 103) (The Bayeux Tapestry is a strip of linen 200 ft. long, worked in coloured worsted. It is probably contemporary with William I and is attributed by tradition to his Queen Matilda)

The Norman army, led by William and the Pope's banner, then crossed the valley and attacked the English again and again; but the housecarls, fighting with their huge battle-axes on the spur of the hill, kept their shield-wall intact. The Norman cavalry were able to deal effectively with a courageous but premature rush downhill of the undisciplined fyrd; apart from this the Normans made little headway against the stout defence of the English. But towards evening the Normans pretended to retreat; again the fyrd, to their cost, pursued them downhill. Then it was that the Norman archers, supported by a cavalry charge, decided the issue. William ordered his archers to shoot high above the shield-wall. Harold's two brothers (Gurth and Leofwine) fell, and then Harold himself was killed by an arrow which struck him in the eye. Again 'the Normans let fly their arrows, smite and hew their way through: yet so solid did the English stand that the only movement was the falling of the dead'.<sup>1</sup> And so it was till every one of Harold's devoted housecarls had fallen round the body of their king, as the Scots were one day to fall around their king at Flodden. The leaderless remains of the fyrd were pursued into the dark forest of the Andredsweald. The Normans spent the night on the battlefield.

The body of the last Saxon king was found by Edith, the Swan Neck, whom Harold had loved in old times, and it was buried in Waltham Abbey which he had founded. On the spot where Harold had fallen, William in later days built Battle Abbey to commemorate the victory God had granted to his crusade; and on the roll of Battle Abbey were inscribed the names of all his knights—Norman, French, Breton, Flemish—who had fought at Hastings.

The result of the battle disposed of William's only possible rivals, Harold and his brothers. At one stroke, the back of the English resistance was broken. Office seekers like Archbishop Stigand, and waverers like Earls Edwin and Morcar, submitted to the Conqueror; but the flower of the English people lay dead on Battle Hill. But for that unlucky arrow, King Harold might have 'lived to fight another day', might perhaps have thrust the Norman duke back into the seas whence he came.

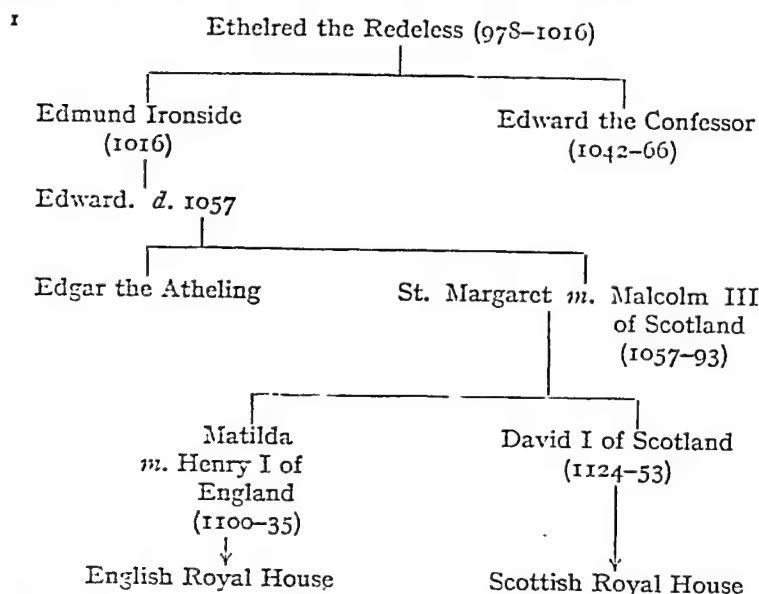
<sup>1</sup> William of Poitiers (chaplain of William I): 'Sagittant, feriunt, perforant Normanni: mortui plus, dum cadunt; quam vivi, moveri videntur.'



After Hastings, William's chief object was to secure London. He brought his army to Wallingford, crossed the Thames there, moved up to Berkhamsted, and so came down on London from the north. The Witan, who had already offered the crown to Edgar the Atheling—Edmund Ironside's grandson<sup>1</sup>—now decided to submit to William. All the chief bishops and nobles, led by the Atheling himself, came out to Berkhamsted to make their submission to William. The Conqueror then entered London, and was crowned in the Abbey on Christmas Day. During the coronation service, the Norman soldiers present suspected some act of treachery on the part of the English and began setting fire to some neighbouring houses. So was William crowned, amid a noise of tumult and fighting, with the flames from his new subjects' houses lighting up the scene.

Coronation  
of William I

But England was not yet conquered: the next year (1067) there were risings at Exeter and York, the latter led by the brother earls of Mercia and Northumbria. They were pardoned, but they rebelled again (1069). This, the most serious rebellion of the reign, was aided by an invasion of Danes under King Sweyn, whose ships entered the Humber. William bought him off, then settled the north once and for all by a foul deed, worthy of a Viking's descendant. From York to Durham he



laid waste all the fields, and destroyed every village. The inhabitants who could not escape across the Scottish border were massacred; the very cattle were killed. This 'harrying of the north' made Yorkshire and Durham a desert—*hoc est wasta*, says the record in Domesday Book—and it was long ere the wasted country was re-populated.

Harrying of  
the north  
1069

Hereward  
the Wake  
1070-2

There was one more English rebellion: that of Hereward the Wake (1070). This hero, who was joined by Earl Morcar—Edwin had been killed in the last rebellion—held out for many months in the isle of Ely, then surrounded by watery marshes. But the Normans built a causeway across the marsh to Hereward's stronghold, and most of the defenders were captured, though Hereward escaped (1072). So even the waters of the Fens failed to shelter the last English leader. There could be no more risings in the ghastly desert of the north. Hastings, London, west and north and east—England was conquered at last.

## 2. Feudalism and the Manor

With the Norman Conquest is generally associated the development of Feudalism in England.

Origin of  
Feudal  
System

What is known as the Feudal System came gradually into existence in the centuries following the collapse of the Roman Empire in the west. During that long period of warfare and insecurity, the tiller of the soil found it safer to surrender his land and 'commend' himself to the armed man or lord of the neighbourhood who could protect him in the use of it, and the lord himself thereby acquired certain 'liberties' or privileges. This was what happened in Saxon England, especially during the Danish raids; and King Edgar had ordained that 'every landless man should have a lord'.

Its develop-  
ment in  
Norman  
England

William I did not invent or introduce Feudalism, though the Norman lawyers and lords, in dealing with Saxon custom, elaborated the system of Land Tenure,<sup>1</sup> and even this took a

<sup>1</sup> The Land Law of England after the Conquest became by degrees completely feudalized. The feudal term tenant (Latin, *tenere*) survives to this day as the 'holder' of land from a landlord. Feudal is derived, through the medieval Latin *feodum*, i.e. 'fief' or 'fee', from an ancient Germanic word meaning 'property' or 'cattle' (the oldest form of property). Note the terms fief (land), vassal (land-holder), fealty (loyalty), homage (Latin, *homo*, his 'man').

century or more to reach its full development. The name 'Feudalism', however, is a later invention of the lawyers and historians: it was unknown to the people about whom so much has been so learnedly written.

In considering the meaning and workings of the Feudal System, two points must be noted. First, as land was the chief <sup>Land</sup> source of wealth and power in the Middle Ages, society was organized according to a man's relation to the land. Whatever a man's occupation might be, his status as lord, freeman, or villein was determined by the conditions on which he held his land and by the extent of that land. If a man were a great lord, he was so only because he held wide lands; if he were a villein, he was so because he was 'tied to the soil'. Secondly, all classes—lords as well as villeins—had certain duties to perform, in return for whatever rights they enjoyed.

All land was held, in theory, of the king; there were no land-owners, in the modern sense of the word 'owners', but only landholders or tenants. A tenant, before receiving his land, had to kneel before his lord to do homage by placing his hands between his lord's, and then he swore fealty to his lord. The tenant was also 'invested'<sup>1</sup> or presented with some symbol, <sup>Investiture</sup> such as a clod taken from the soil of the manor. The oath of fealty not only bound the tenant to faithful obedience, but <sup>Fealty</sup> implied that he would perform his feudal duties and render some form of service, such as military service.

The main duty of the fighting man—the baron and the knight—was to provide soldiers, usually for forty days' service per year; the performance of this duty was what he owed the king in return for his land. Those barons and knights who held <sup>Tenants-in-Chief</sup> their land direct from the king were known as tenants-in-chief,

<sup>1</sup> *Investiture* was the outcome of feudal society, and it survives to this day. It applied to every holder of land or office, who before he exercised his rights had to be invested, i.e. presented with an appropriate symbol. For example, the investiture of a king was the receiving of his crown; of a bishop, the ring and crozier; of a baron, the sword or sceptre, emblems of military service, and of judicial privilege; of a knight, the accolade (a stroke on the shoulder by the king's sword, as nowadays when the king invests a knight); of a lord of a manor, the 'seizing' or taking of a clod from the manor. Similarly, ministers and bishops still 'kiss hands' on appointment to an office of state under the sovereign.

of whom about 1,400 are named in Domesday Book. The lesser barons and knights who held land from the tenants-in-chief, and not direct from the king, were the sub-tenants, of whom Domesday Book names about 8,000; in their case the oath of fealty was sworn in the presence of the tenant-in-chief, though the sub-tenant was sometimes called upon to pay homage to the king as well.

**Sub-tenants** In addition to rendering military service, the vassal had to pay to his lord feudal taxes or 'aids' on certain occasions—'for the ransoming of our body, for the making of our eldest son a knight and for the once marrying of our eldest daughter'. In the case of the marriage of the king's daughter, this 'aid' became a fairly heavy tax; for example, Henry I collected three shillings per hide (120 acres) of land throughout England when his daughter Matilda was betrothed to the Emperor Henry V. Another payment, called a 'relief', was due to the lord when a vassal succeeded to his father's estate: he could not take possession until the relief was paid. This custom resembles the modern system of death duties, which are, of course, paid to the State, now the 'lord' of all.

**Aids** Coming lower down the social scale, we find the same principle of rights and duties at work. The lord held the land; the peasant tilled it. The lord's duty was to protect the community, and his rights included a tax on both the labour and the produce of the peasant. Conversely, the peasant's duties were to perform these personal services to the lord; his right was to expect protection, and also, by custom, to farm part of the soil for his own sustenance.

**Reliefs** Piers the Plowman (in Langland's fourteenth-century poem)<sup>1</sup> expressed this relationship between peasant and lord ('Sir Knight') in this way:

**Lord and Serf**  
 'Surely, Sir Knight,' said Piers then,  
 'I shall swink [work] and sweat, and sow for us both,  
 And labour for thy love, all my life-time,  
 In covenant that thou keep Holy Church and myself  
 From worthless and wicked men, that would us destroy.'

**The Manor** In the Middle Ages the normal unit of a holding of land was the manor, which was the Norman name for an estate, and a

<sup>1</sup> See below, p. 239.

manor might include a whole village, or part of one or more than one village. The manor became the local agency by which the Normans enforced their feudal arrangements. The lords, to whom manors were granted, had the great mass of the villagers at their beck and call. The Norman Conquest depressed the condition of many of the 'freemen', the ceorl or thegn of Saxon times being swamped in the large class of unfree villeins. The term 'villein' at first meant a villager, but in time it came to imply servitude.<sup>1</sup>

Norman  
lords and  
Saxon serfs

The lord of the manor himself had his own farm, known as the demesne (the farm of the *dominus* or lord), and this was worked by the villagers. This compulsory labour on the lord's land was one of the distinctive marks of villeinage. In return the villein had the right to cultivate certain strips of land—he might hold a bundle of thirty acres scattered in the arable fields.<sup>2</sup> He received no wages, but he had to do certain 'base' services for his lord—the heavy 'week work' and extra work or 'boon work'. From three to five days a week he had to provide one labourer (himself or a member of his family) to work on the lord's land. Besides this week work he had to do boon work for the lord at certain seasons, such as harvest, and on boon-days the lord kept him in bread and beer and perhaps herrings. The villein was not 'free'—he was 'bound to the soil' (*adscriptus glebae*): he could not, like the labourer of to-day, change his occupation or leave the village or even get married without his lord's permission; but as long as he lived, and performed his due services, no one could take away his land, not even the lord. When he ground his own corn, he must do so at the mill of the lord, who claimed a percentage of the produce. At Easter, Pentecost, and Christmas, the lord claimed payment in kind—poultry, eggs, butter, and what

Compul-  
sory labour

Boon work

<sup>1</sup> How great a change the Norman Conquest might make in a village can be gauged from this entry in the Bedfordshire Domesday Book: 'There are one villein, seven bordars and a serf' (i.e. nine 'unfree' men) in 1086, whereas before the Conquest 'nine thegns held this manor' (i.e. nine 'free' men who were probably working 'gentlemen farmers').

<sup>2</sup> On some manors the villein's holding was a virgate—in its commonest form about 30 acres, i.e. about one-fourth of a hide (120 acres) which was 'the original land of a Saxon household'. But the virgate may vary from 15 to 80 acres.



PLAN OF A NORMAN MANOR

not. By this system the lord of several manors was able to tour the country, living on the produce of each manor in turn ; or the produce could be sent to some central residence of the lord (e.g. the monastery in the case of monastic manors), or again the lord might market the produce locally.

The 'bordars' and 'cottars' (cottagers) were a lower grade of villein, but even they held land—unlike the agricultural labourers of to-day. Sometimes there were also bondmen or 'serfs', who held no land but who were kept by the lord to do his chores and special tasks, e.g. the beekeeper, the hayward, the woodward, and the swineherd. But after the Conquest these serfs became manorial officials and were frequently wage-paid hirelings.

Bordars and  
Cottars

Thus the lord of a manor had various classes of tenants. The villeins formed the great mass of the population, perhaps three-quarters. Besides the villeins, there were 'freemen' who held varying amounts of land. The freeman was 'free' in the sense that he had various legal rights, and he could enforce his rights even against the lord ; he had the power to sell or alienate his land ; he might have to do a certain amount of ploughing on the lord's land, but generally he owed no week work.

Freemen

The lord's land and the peasant's land were intermingled, being mapped out into acre strips, shaped like an oblong (220 yards by 22 yards), though the shape and dimensions became altered in course of time. The lord generally had one or more ploughs, and the villein usually shared a plough and ox team with his neighbours. Thus the land was ploughed 'in common', just as custom demanded that all the strips should be sown with the same crop. The ploughing was done mostly by teams of eight oxen, hard and bony creatures very different from the fat sleek beasts of our time. Horses were used mostly for carts and road traffic.

The Strip  
System

The manorial village provided the lord of the manor with profit. It also provided the villagers with the means of existence. They not only farmed a number of strips scattered over the two or three 'open' arable fields;<sup>1</sup> but they also shared in the common pasture ; and they fed their pigs in the woodland and their cows and geese on the large waste or 'common' which

The  
Common

<sup>1</sup> For 'open' fields and the 'acre', see Chapter II, Sect. 2.

surrounded the village. All these were important customary rights. With rare exceptions they have all disappeared to-day. The exceptions may be seen in those few towns and villages where the people still have the right to send their cattle to pasture on the 'common'.

Manor  
Courts

The lord's manor house was the centre of every village, and in its hall was held the Manor Court in which the villagers' quarrels and business were settled. The Conqueror retained the old Saxon Courts of Hundred and Shire, and as a rule he reserved to them those criminal cases involving life and death which the continental barons commonly tried in their own courts. The Norman lord (like the Saxon thegn before him) or his steward presided over the Manor Court, and its proceedings were determined by local tradition—'custom time out of mind'—known as the 'custom of the manor'. At the Manor Court holdings of land were re-granted on the death of a former tenant, and the grant was set down in Latin on rolls of parchment: thus, 'Henry Gell who held of the lord  $2\frac{1}{2}$  acres is dead. Henry his son is heir and he came into court and paid heriot (inheritance tax), 12 pence.' These manor 'rolls'—many have survived—provide pictures of every aspect of the daily life of the manor, just as the bailiff's 'account rolls' set down all the details of farming and account for literally every farthing of incomings or outgoings.

Manor  
Court  
Records

The records of the Manor Court reveal the usual human frailties. 'Walter of the Moor, thou art attached to answer in this court wherefore by night, and against the lord's peace, thou didst enter the lord's preserve and carried away all manner of fish at thy will. How wilt thou acquit thyself and make amends?'—he was judged to be at the lord's mercy (i.e. he was amerced or fined). Again: 'Henry of Combe complaineth of Stephen Carpenter that, as he was going his way at such a time, there came this Stephen and encountered him in such a place, and assailed him in villain words which were undeserved. Whereupon Henry answered him civilly and said that he was talking at random, which so enraged the said Stephen that he snatched his holly staff out of his hand, and gave it him about his head and shoulders and elsewhere all over his body, and then went off'.—Stephen was remanded



till next court. 'Peter of the Water' is summoned 'because he has displaced a certain boundary stone'—a serious offence, for boundary stones marked the end of one strip and the beginning of another. 'J. le Frenshe' is summoned 'because he had beaten a woman in his fold'.

In a school-book of the eleventh century,<sup>1</sup> a ploughman of the manor tells of his hard daily life: 'Be the winter never so stark, I dare not linger at home for fear of my lord. . . . Every day must I plough a full acre or more, after having yoked the oxen, and fastened the share and the coulter to the plough. I have a boy driving the oxen with a goad who is hoarse with cold and shouting. I must fill the manger of the oxen with hay and water them and carry out the litter. Mighty hard work I have to do, because I am not free.' And the shepherd says: 'Very early in the morning I drive my sheep to the lea, and stand over them with my dogs in heat and cold, lest the wolves eat them up.'

Hard life  
of Serfs

The villeins lived in hovels, usually divided into two parts, one for the use of the animals. Their simple dwellings, devoid of chimneys, could not have been pleasant to live, cook, and sleep in: particularly when the winter cold enforced the choice between freezing and choking in the fumes of a peat fire. It is small wonder that they often enlivened the monotony of their existence by hard drinking, ere they crept to their beds of dirty straw in a candleless room. Yet even the lot of the medieval peasant—with all its undoubted hardship, and in spite of wars, pestilences, and famines, of dark hours and the long Lenten fast—had its compensations in a security of tenure and in a share of communal life, varied only by the feasts of the Church and the changes of the seasons.

Housing  
conditions

### 3. *William the Conqueror*

For his invasion of England the Conqueror had gained the support of the Pope by promising to dethrone not only Harold but Archbishop Stigand.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, when England was conquered, Stigand was deposed (1070), and his fall was followed by that of nearly all the Saxon bishops. Their places

Stigand and  
Lanfranc

<sup>1</sup> Ælfric's *Colloquies* (a late Saxon school-book).

<sup>2</sup> See above, p. 77.

were taken by learned and able Norman churchmen, at whose head as Archbishop of Canterbury was placed Lanfranc, a scholarly Italian who had made his mark at the Norman abbeys of Bec and Caen. Lanfranc proved to be a good statesman. He has been called William's 'one friend', and he and the king became as close allies in the reform of the lax Anglo-Saxon Church as Dunstan and Edgar had been in their day.

Hildebrand Hildebrand, who became Pope Gregory VII in 1073, was a great reformer. The monastic system produced many remarkable men, but none more remarkable than this Pope. Hildebrand was a little man, who spoke with a stammer; but the grandeur of his character overshadows that of all his contemporaries. He had great ambitions. He saw in the Papacy the instrument for welding together all Christian society under one head, whose behests all earthly kings and rulers should obey. His schemes brought him into violent conflict with the Emperor and he was at last driven from the Holy City. 'I have loved righteousness and hated iniquity,' he said, 'therefore I die in exile.'

Church William the Conqueror encouraged Lanfranc to enforce some of Hildebrand's reforms, notably that concerning the celibacy of the clergy, though Lanfranc did not compel a priest already married to put away his wife. William also set up special Courts Church Courts, separated from the ordinary courts. In Saxon times bishop and earl—or bishop and sheriff—together had presided over the shire court and jointly administered justice to both lay and cleric. Henceforth the bishop or his official, in the new Church Courts, dealt with legal business arising out of marriages and wills, with moral cases and church discipline. More will be heard of these courts and cases in the quarrel of Henry II and Becket.

William I William was, however, unwilling to admit the larger demands of Hildebrand. He flatly refused to acknowledge that he held England as a fief of the Holy See: 'I have not,' he said, 'nor will I, swear fealty, which was never sworn by any of my predecessors to yours.' William also denied the right of any ecclesiastics to complain over his head to Rome or to appeal to the papal court without his leave. Hearing that the Abbot of Eu, in Normandy, had done so, he remarked that he had

William I  
and Papal  
Claims

Appeals to  
Rome

a great respect for the Papacy in matters which concerned religion, but, he continued, 'Si un moine de mes terres osait porter plainte contre moi, je le ferais pendre à l'arbre le plus élevé de la forêt.'

William also insisted that abbots and bishops should be elected in the presence of the king, and he continued to invest them with the signs (ring and crozier) of their sacred office. Hildebrand, however, claimed that investiture of clerics should be in the hands of the Church, and this problem was the main cause of his bitter quarrel with the Emperor Henry IV, and later of Henry I's quarrel with Archbishop Anselm.

Thus William's reform of the Church had important results, and left some difficult problems for his successors. From his reign onwards England became more closely incorporated with Feudal and Catholic Christendom. Monastic life was reformed after the model of Cluny.<sup>1</sup> A new era of learning and of building began, and the country was gradually covered with splendid monastic and cathedral churches. Yet, in spite of his friendship with Hildebrand, William insisted on some measure of independence, and this spirit remained one of the chief characteristics of the Church in England.

William I was in his own kingdom by far the strongest monarch of his day; and he was so because he avoided the worst dangers of Feudalism, both as he knew it in France and as he found it in Saxon England. Let us see what these dangers were.

The king, in giving out most of the land in the country to his barons, was obviously taking a risk. He had the right to exact their services; but he might not be strong enough to enforce his right. The very fact that the barons and knights were expected to bear arms gave them dangerous powers. It was very likely to lead to private warfare, as happened in Germany, and as happened sometimes in England, especially under weak kings like Stephen. The armed baron was a dangerous servant, unless he had a strong master.

There was also another danger—the actual disruption of the state. In France, for example, in the time of William the Conqueror, the whole country was split up into a dozen or

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter V.

**Large fiefs** more great fiefs, each ruled by a duke or count—William himself was one of them. These dukes and counts had become almost independent of the king; their lands became hereditary holdings, their duties merely theoretical; in these circumstances the king's power was reduced to a shadow. A similar tendency had shown itself in later Saxon England, particularly under Edward the Confessor. In his time the great fiefs of the Godwine family, and of the earls of Mercia and Northumbria, were well on the way to becoming independent provinces, like Normandy, Brittany, or Anjou.

William the Conqueror, while quite content to be an independent duke owing only nominal allegiance to a French king, was anxious, on becoming a king himself, to prevent his own vassals in England from behaving in like manner—he would not be, as the Capets in France were, 'overshadowed by the tall trees of the feudal forest'. He accordingly confiscated all the lands of those who had fought for King Harold, or who were suspected of favouring the cause of that alleged traitor and perjurer. Since the suspects included not only the great earls like Edwin and Morcar, but the vast majority of the Saxon thegns, William was able to confiscate the bulk of the lands in England. But at once he was confronted with a fresh difficulty. He had about five thousand Norman and other foreign knights, all of them greedy for land. Some of them he could trust to be faithful vassals; others he could not; time only could show which were which. The history of England for four centuries after Hastings is, in one respect, the history of the relations of the king and his barons.

**William I and the Norman lords**  
**The Manors** With certain exceptions (noted below), the barons found their manors, that is their estates, scattered all over England. This was due not so much to policy as to accident. The estates of the English thegns were already scattered in a haphazard way when William took possession; and he simply transferred manors from English thegns to Norman knights as he gradually conquered and settled the country. But he did not revive the dangerously large earldoms of Wessex and Northumbria, which had existed in the time of Canute and Edward the Confessor, for he did not favour the holding of large provincial areas by one man. The exceptions which he

made to this rule may be traced either to family connexions or to the necessity of guarding the main Borders. Thus the king gave practically the whole of Cornwall, together with large estates in Devon and Dorset, to his half-brother Robert of Mortain; nor had he reason to regret the gift. Again, William gave to another half-brother, Odo, Bishop of Bayeux, the title of Earl of Kent, together with a large proportion of the lands of that county. But Odo was one of the first to prove an unfaithful vassal, and William was later (1082) obliged to arrest and imprison him, and despoil him of his lands. Other Norman families, mostly related to the ducal house, were also given considerable estates.

Distribution  
of  
Manors

The largest concentrations of territory in single hands were the three earldoms of Chester, Shrewsbury, and Hereford, created to guard the Welsh border. The earldom of Hereford was given to William Fitz Osbern, an old friend of the Conqueror. But Fitz Osbern's son, Roger de Breteuil, rebelled (1078) and lost the earldom, and after this it was not revived.<sup>1</sup> One English earl was spared in William's confiscations—Waltheof, Earl of Northampton; but he also was later implicated in a rebellion, and was beheaded (1076). Another large fief was the border or palatine earldom of Durham,<sup>2</sup> where the bishops were guardians of the Scottish Border, as the Earls of Chester were of the Welsh.

The Welsh  
Border

Near the end of his reign William took two steps which show his further determination to check the power of the feudal baronage. He spent the mid-winter of 1085 at Gloucester, and, at a great 'gemot' or meeting there, he 'spoke very deeply with his Witan concerning this land, how it was held, and what were its tenantry. He then sent his men over all England, into every shire . . . '—to inquire into the value of every estate or manor, and to place all the details on record so that they might be available when the king's 'geld' or tax was collected.

The  
Gloucester  
Meeting  
1085

<sup>1</sup> The earldom of Shrewsbury came to an end for similar reasons in 1102, when the earl rebelled against Henry I.

<sup>2</sup> The Earl of Northumberland surrendered all his rights in the palatine earldom of Durham—between Tyne and Tees—to the bishop (1091). From then until the reign of Henry VIII the bishops held almost royal powers (*jura regalia*) in the county. Their jurisdiction was not finally brought to an end until 1836.

Every man, baron and sub-tenant, without exception, had to answer this royal inquiry and so acknowledge that the king's grant was the source of his lands and privileges. When this Great Survey of the lands was completed, the returns were arranged and classified in a businesslike way, and the complete record became known as Domesday Book, the book by which all men would be judged.

Domesday 1085 Domesday is a unique record of the land and customs of England, before and at the time of the Conquest. Its descriptions of manor and borough illustrate the old Saxon customs as well as the effects of the Conquest. Its primary purpose was, however, taxation—it was the great rate book of the kingdom—and for this reason it details the assessment of every holding, together with the rents and other kinds of income accruing to the king from every part of the land.

Domesday methods The officers who conducted the Conqueror's Great Survey were told to record of every manor 'how it is named; who held it in the time of King Edward and who holds it now; how many hides there are; how many ploughs belong to the demesne and how many to the men; how many freemen, villeins, bordars, cottars, serfs; how much wood and meadow; how many pastures, mills, and fishponds; how much it was worth in the time of King Edward, and when King William granted it, and as it is now (1085); and if more (geld or tax) can be had therefrom than is had'. 'So narrowly' was the survey made, says the Chronicler, that there was 'not one yard of land, nor one ox nor one cow nor one swine left out that was not set down in this record', i.e. everything was recorded that had a money value and interested the treasury of the king.

Oath of Salisbury 1086 The next year the Conqueror summoned all the landholders 'that were worth aught . . . whosoever vassals they were' to meet him at Salisbury, and there swear oaths of fealty to him, 'that they would be faithful to him against all other men'—in other words, even against their own immediate lords. How many tenants were able to travel to Salisbury to take this oath is not known. An oath of fealty was of course due, in any case, from all subjects, and William probably summoned this meeting in 1086 in view of a threatened invasion from Scandinavia. Domesday Book (1085) and the Salisbury Oath

(1086) showed that William was not satisfied till he was acknowledged to be a real king and not merely a feudal overlord. The summons to Salisbury was his last public act in England.

Discontented barons in England like Bishop Odo and Roger de Breteuil were fairly easily crushed in the Conqueror's reign; and the rebels had been punished by the loss of their lands. William had more trouble in Normandy. He had invested his eldest son, Robert, with the duchy, but had kept a close watch on the young man's government. Robert chafed under his father's interference and allied himself with some rebellious barons in southern Normandy. William thereupon laid siege to his son's castle of Gerberoi (1079); the battle was indecisive, but the king was unhorsed and wounded by his own son's lance.

Duke  
Robert

At the end of his reign William became involved in a war with his feudal overlord, the King of France. He burnt the French king's town of Mantes, on the Seine; but, as he was riding back through the smouldering ruins, his horse stumbled violently, causing the king a fatal internal injury. He was carried to the Norman capital, Rouen, where 'sharp death, that passes by neither rich man nor poor, seized him also'. While his second son William hastened to England across the Channel, the Conqueror was buried without ceremony in the abbey of St. Stephen, Caen, which he had founded.

Death of  
William I  
1087

The character of William the Conqueror has been summed up once and for all by the monk who wrote this portion of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*:

'This King William was a very wise man, and very rich; more splendid and powerful than any of his predecessors were. He was mild to the good men that loved God, and beyond all measure severe to the man that gainsaid his will. . . . He was also very dignified. Thrice he bare his crown each year, as oft as he was in England. . . . And then were with him all the rich men over all England, archbishops and bishops, abbots and earls, thegns and knights. So very stern was he also and hot, that no man durst do anything against his will. . . . Bishops he hurled from their bishoprics, and abbots from their abbacies, and thegns into prison. At length he spared not his own brother Odo, who was a very rich

His  
Character

bishop in Normandy. . . . But amongst other things which is not to be forgotten is the good peace which he made in this land; so that a man of any account might go over his kingdom unhurt with his bosom full of gold. No man durst slay another, had he never so much evil done to the other. . . .'<sup>1</sup>

Such is the chronicler's praise. There is a pathetic note, though, in his next remark: 'Assuredly in his time men had much distress and very many sorrows. Castles he let men build and miserably swink the poor. The king himself extorted from his subjects many marks of gold, and many hundred pounds of silver.' One other complaint the chronicler makes: 'He planted a great preserve for deer, and he laid down laws therewith, that whosoever should slay hart or hind should be blinded. As greatly did he love the tall deer as if he were their father. He also ordained concerning the hares, that they should go free.' The Conqueror had made the New Forest in Hampshire—conveniently near the royal residence of Winchester—and many villages and farms were partly destroyed for the purpose. His successors were always trying to extend the area of forest land: in the twelfth century it comprised nearly a third of the total acreage of the kingdom. The royal forests were subject to special Forest Courts, at which those who were caught poaching were severely punished. These laws continued in force till the Charter of the Forest, wrung from King John, mitigated their severity.

When we look at a beautiful country like the New Forest to-day, we may remember that it has not always been so peaceful, and that its loveliness was once marred by man's cruelty. The savage laws of the Norman and Plantagenet kings once kept a whole countryside in terror, and thus enforced the injunction that the king's deer should go free.

#### 4. *The Conqueror's Sons*

William I left Normandy to Robert, and England to his second son, William Rufus; to his youngest son, Henry, he left 5,000 pounds of silver. The succession of Rufus in England

<sup>1</sup> 'To them that wolde his wylle do, debonere he was and mylde,  
But to them that hym withseyde, strong tyrant and wilde.'

(Robert of Gloucester on William I.)



was disputed by some of the barons, led by Bishop Odo of Bayeux, who had been released from prison on the Conqueror's death. Rufus put down the rising without much difficulty, and his uncle was deprived of his lands for the second time.

William II  
1087-1100

The character of Rufus was not an attractive one. He was a coarse, red-faced young man, whose chief pleasure, like his father's, was hunting; but, apart from a belief in force, Rufus did not resemble his father, and certainly lacked his ability. He frequently quarrelled with his elder brother, and was relieved when Robert, fired by religious enthusiasm and the spirit of adventure, decided with Bishop Odo to join the First Crusade (1095). William lent Robert 10,000 marks for the expenses of his journey, on the security of the Duchy of Normandy.

Lanfranc died two years after the Conqueror, but William II did not fill the See of Canterbury for four years. His Treasurer, the low-bred Ranulf Flambard, had discovered that, by the simple expedient of not appointing a successor to a deceased bishop, the revenues of a vacant see could be made to flow into the royal coffers. This device was employed, to the great scandal of the kingdom, in the case of Canterbury. But soon (1093) Rufus lay, as he thought, on his death-bed, and began to repent of his many sins. He summoned Anselm, the saintly Abbot of Bec, to his bedside, and forced the unwilling monk to accept the vacant archbishopric. Anselm complained that he, 'a weak old sheep', was now yoked to 'that fierce young bull, the king of England'. But Rufus, having recovered his health, regretted his choice; he soon found that the mild Anselm was a man of unbending will. The new archbishop reproved Rufus to his face for his scandalous life. He refused to accept from the hands of the king the 'pallium', the symbol of his office, sent him by the Pope. As Rufus's conduct grew more and more unbearable, and even threatening, Anselm left the kingdom for Rome.

Ranulf  
Flambard

Anselm

The Red King was slain, possibly by accident, while hunting in the New Forest (1100). His brother Henry, who had been in the hunting party, rode straight to Winchester and seized the royal treasure. Duke Robert was still in the Holy Land, and there was no opposition to Henry's succession. Henry at

Death of  
Rufus, 1100

once imprisoned the unpopular and extortionate tax-gatherer, Ranulf Flambard, in the Tower; a few years later Ranulf was allowed to return to his bishopric of Durham and there he busied himself with building its cathedral.

Henry I  
1100-35 Henry I's Charter—issued at his coronation and ordered to be read in every Shire Court—promised, in somewhat vague terms, to redress all grievances, and to keep peace in the land. The former promise was scarcely capable of fulfilment; the latter, Henry, whom the Chronicler calls the Lion of Justice, faithfully carried out. His Charter, as will be seen, became the basis of the greatest of the Charters, obtained by the barons from King John.

Henry I was not a coarse brute of the Rufus type. His ability to read and write earned him the title of 'Beauclerc'; in his early years, says the chronicler, he 'so eagerly imbibed the honeyed delights of reading that in after time no alarms of war, no cares of business, could dislodge them from his noble mind'. His long reign of thirty-five years was one of the most prosperous and peaceful in our early history. He gained popularity with his English subjects by marrying Matilda, daughter of Malcolm III of Scotland, and a member of the old Saxon royal family of England.<sup>1</sup> The children of Henry's marriage were one son, William, who was drowned at sea, and one daughter, Matilda. This daughter was married, at the age of eleven, to the Holy Roman Emperor, Henry V—a brilliant match for a Norman princess. The Emperor, besides being the nominal secular head of Christendom, was the ruler of the powerful German kingdom, and he also controlled Italy.

The one and only serious rebellion in Henry I's reign occurred at its outset. His brother Robert returned from Jerusalem and invaded England; he landed at Portsmouth (1101), and marched on London. Henry agreed to pay his brother a pension; he then prepared to deal with the barons who had supported Robert's claims. The most dangerous rebel was Robert of Bellême, Earl of Shrewsbury, a cold-blooded tyrant whose cruelties had long terrorized the unfortunate people of the Welsh border. The earl's castles of Shrewsbury

<sup>1</sup> Her mother was St. Margaret, sister of Edgar the Atheling. See table, p. 81.

and Bridgnorth were besieged and captured by the king, and he was forced to surrender; after which Henry banished him from the kingdom and confiscated his estates. The conduct of Bellême was but a foretaste of what the barons were to do in the next reign; but Henry would have none of it. After this time, says a chronicler, 'King Henry reigned prosperously for three and thirty years, during which no man in England dared to rebel or hold any castle against him.' The final quarrel with Duke Robert occurred after Bellême's downfall. Henry invaded Normandy, took Bayeux and Caen, and defeated his brother's army at Tinchebrai (1106) with the help of English soldiers, thus revenging the battle of Hastings. The duke was captured, and spent the rest of his life in captivity in Cardiff Castle. Henry annexed Normandy.

Robert of  
Bellême

Tinchebrai  
1106

Archbishop Anselm had been recalled by Henry, and their relations were at first friendly. But William I's problem of the relations of the royal power with the spiritual soon arose again. Hildebrand had laid down the principle that investiture for Church offices was the Pope's privilege; on the other hand the Emperor, like William I, had claimed that it was his. Henry I made a similar claim in regard to English bishops. Anselm, backed by the Pope, Paschal II, was adamant in his refusal to allow royal investiture; and so for the second time he went to Rome in voluntary exile. Then three years later Henry I and Anselm arranged at Bec (1106) a compromise over the Investiture Question, by which bishops were to be elected by the cathedral clergy, and invested with the ring and crozier by the Pope or his legate, but for their lands they were to do homage to the king.

Henry and  
Anselm

Throughout his reign Henry I governed England with vigour and success. The chief council meeting of the kingdom, after the Conquest, was called *Magnum Concilium* or the Great Council—the origin of our House of Lords. It consisted of great lords of lands (including bishops and abbots), or such as could conveniently attend, and it inherited some of the traditions of the Witan. This Council was summoned into the King's Court—*Curia Regis*—which sat wherever the king happened to be. In Henry I's time, as state business increased, various developments of the King's Court took place.

*Curia Regis*

First, a smaller council became active, consisting of the great men of the king's household and their clerks—the Justiciar (the King's Vicegerent), the Treasurer, the Chancellor (King's Secretary), the Chamberlain (Head of the King's Household), the Marshal and Constable (concerned with the feudal forces). Secondly, it became the duty of the Treasurer<sup>1</sup> to preside over the Exchequer Court, so called from the chequered cloth covering the table of accounts. At this Court the sheriffs and others paid in their piles of coins and had their accounts audited. This system was begun by Henry I's famous Treasurer, Roger, Bishop of Salisbury; and ever since his time the Exchequer has been the government office for collecting and managing the national revenue. Thirdly, we can discern the beginnings of the system of itinerant<sup>2</sup> judges—that is, justices of the King's Court who travelled to the shire courts to do the king's financial and judicial business. Thus Henry I was responsible for an important development of the King's Court, and he selected and trained a body of permanent officials to carry on the work of government. It was to these that he gave his confidence rather than to the feudal magnates, who were not always interested in good government. His system was developed by his grandson, Henry II.

Charter of  
London

Towns and trade were growing in Henry's day, partly owing to an influx of French traders and of Jews. The wealth of London, in particular, enabled the citizens to buy valuable privileges from the king. The famous charter of the City of London, granted by Henry I, allowed the citizens to collect the revenues of Middlesex, in return for a rent of £300 a year payable to the Exchequer; Danegeld, still levied on the rest of England, was given up in London; and the citizens were allowed to choose their own sheriff and justiciar. Here, in the cherished privileges of London, we see a beginning of self-

<sup>1</sup> The office of *Treasurer* is no longer held by one man. His place as head of the Treasury is now taken by the *Chancellor of the Exchequer*. Distinguish between the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Lord Chancellor—originally the King's Chancellor (official Secretary)—who in course of time became the highest officer of the Crown and the head of the law. (*Chancellor*—one who sat *ad cancellos*, i.e. at the grating which separated the public from the judges.)

<sup>2</sup> i.e. judges *in itinere* (or, abbreviated, in eyre), i.e. on circuit.

government in English towns, which was to be so important a feature of the later Middle Ages.

Henry's only son, William, was drowned in 1120. In 1125 his daughter, the Empress Matilda, became a widow. Married <sup>Matilda</sup> again to Geoffrey, Count of Anjou, she was declared Henry's heiress; and the Norman barons were forced to take the oath of fealty to her as her father's successor both in England and Normandy. Unfortunately her son, the future Henry II, was only two years old when his grandfather died (1135); and the peaceful reign of the first Henry gave way to nineteen years of confusion.

### 5. *The Anarchy of Stephen's Reign*

Henry I died in Normandy. In England the Great Council of barons, influenced by the Bishop of Winchester, at once put forward the claims of Stephen of Boulogne, who was the bishop's brother, to succeed to the throne. Stephen was the late king's nephew, and therefore a grandson of the Conqueror. He was a more acceptable candidate for the throne than Henry's daughter, Matilda, who, besides being a woman, was married to an Angevin, detested by the Normans. Stephen, <sup>Stephen</sup> on his arrival in England, was therefore acknowledged as king <sup>chosen</sup> by the Great Council—all of whom had sworn allegiance to Matilda—and he was crowned by the Archbishop of Canterbury. <sup>King, 1135</sup>

King Stephen, the chronicler observes, was 'a mild man'; <sup>His</sup> he was quite unable to manage the barons, as his uncles and <sup>Character</sup> grandfather had done, particularly as the situation was complicated by the claims of Matilda to the throne. Matilda was not a more dangerous rival than Duke Robert had been in the previous reign; but her invasion of England had a very different result. Many of the barons took this opportunity of throwing off the royal authority, and without fear of popular vengeance—so complete was the subjection of the Anglo-Saxons to their foreign rulers. Some of the barons supported Matilda, not so much from a liking for her cause as from a liking for baronial anarchy. War was the barons' trade; the <sup>Baronial</sup> civil war from which England suffered for nearly twenty years <sup>Anarchy</sup> was their work. They immediately took on the features of the

wicked giants in the fairy tale: a morbid imagination could not invent worse horrors than those soberly related by the chronicler. His dreadful tale shows how necessary it was for the royal power to quell the tyrants of the castle.

‘When the traitors understood that he (Stephen) was a mild man and soft, and good, and no justice executed, then did they all wonder. They had done him homage, and sworn oaths, but they were all forgetful of their troth; for every rich man built his castles, which they held against him, and when the castles were made, they filled them with devils and evil men. Then took they those whom they suspected to have any goods, labouring men and women, and threw them into prison for their gold and silver, and inflicted on them unutterable tortures; for never were any martyrs so tortured as they were. Then was corn dear, and flesh, and cheese and butter; for there was none in the land. Never yet was there more wretchedness in the land; nor ever did heathen men worse than they did; for they spared neither church nor churchyard, but took all the goods that were therein, and then burned the church and all together. If two men, or three, came riding into a town, all the township fled from them, concluding them to be robbers. To till the ground was to plough the sea; the earth bare no corn, for the land was all laid waste by such deeds; and they said openly that Christ slept, and His saints.’<sup>1</sup>

The events of Stephen’s ‘reign’ may be briefly told. He met with some success at the outset. Robert of Gloucester (Matilda’s half-brother) was defeated in the west of England, and the invasion of King David of Scotland in the north was repelled by the victory at the Battle of the Standard (1138). But Stephen then proceeded to quarrel, first with a powerful section of the barons, led by the Treasurer, Roger of Salisbury, and then with the bishops, led by his own brother of Winchester. Shortly afterwards Matilda landed in England; the king was defeated and taken prisoner at the Battle of Lincoln (1141). The bishops, now on Matilda’s side, declared her queen; but she, in endeavouring to raise a tax from the citizens of London, was expelled from that city before she had been crowned. Next, her brother Robert was captured, and, to procure his release, the king was set free. He besieged Matilda

<sup>1</sup> *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, 1137.





#### ENGLAND AND NORMANDY, 1066-1135

Nearly all the English castles founded by the Norman kings are marked. The Welsh castles, with a few exceptions, are not marked, as they are too numerous. The conquest of Wales went on throughout the Norman period.



in Oxford Castle, whence she escaped in a white cloak over the snow (1142).

Meanwhile Matilda's husband had conquered Normandy. When he died (1151) he was succeeded by his capable son, then aged eighteen. This Count Henry landed in England (1152), and began operations by relieving Wallingford Castle, which was holding out for his mother. Stephen's supporters melted away. The bishops, who had again quarrelled with Stephen, now arranged a peace. It was suggested that, since Stephen's son, Eustace, had died, Henry should be acknowledged as heir to the throne, while Stephen should reign unopposed for the remainder of his life. Stephen agreed (Treaty of Wallingford, 1153), and his death in the following year ensured the peaceful accession of Henry of Anjou, who was to prove himself a greater king even than William of Normandy.

Henry of  
Anjou

Death of  
Stephen  
1154

#### NOTE ON NORMAN CASTLES

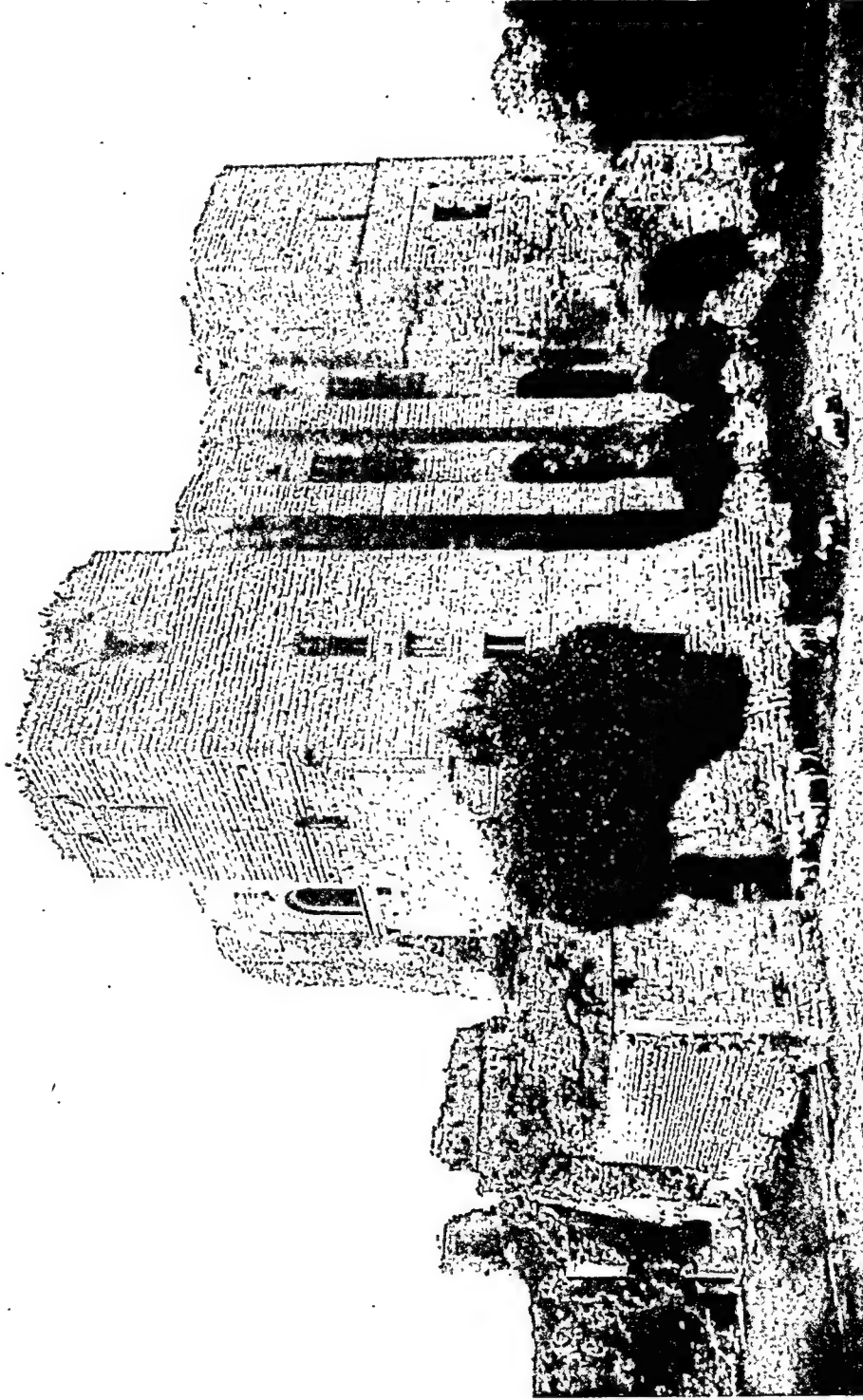
Like the Romans, whom they resembled in many ways, the Normans were great builders. But whereas Roman work in England has largely perished, much of the Norman work remains, the most impressive witness of the life of that time. Besides building a large number of churches, cathedrals, and abbeys,<sup>1</sup> the Normans built castles to hold down the conquered country and to keep the people in subjection.

Of the Conqueror's castles, very few were built of stone,<sup>2</sup> the White Tower of London being the chief exception. His castles were thrown up quickly at strategic points all over England and along the Welsh border. They consisted, at the centre, of an earthwork and wooden fortifications. The earthwork was a mound, called the 'motte', on the top of which was a wooden tower. At the foot of the 'motte' was a rectangular enclosure known as the 'bailey'. The castles shown on the map were all founded during the reigns of the Norman kings. Dover, Pevensey, Arundel, and Corfe guarded the south coast; Exeter, Bristol, and Berkeley, the west; London, Windsor, and Oxford, the Thames Valley; Colchester, Norwich, and Lincoln, the east; Warwick, Kenilworth, and Nottingham, the Midlands; York and

Motte-and-  
bailey  
Castles

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter V, Sect. 2.

<sup>2</sup> The great majority of the massive stone 'keeps' were built by Henry II or later kings.



*The Photochrom Co.*

#### THE AGE OF CASTLE BUILDING

The great Norman keep of Kenilworth Castle. The square mullioned windows were inserted in Elizabethan days by Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester (see pp. 424, 426).

Pontefract, the Pennine border. Another important group was built on or near the Scottish border—Richmond, Durham, Newcastle, Alnwick, and Carlisle.

Perhaps the most important group of castles lay on the Welsh March (border). Shrewsbury and Montgomery Castles tell of the power of the Montgomeries, Earls of Shrewsbury. Chepstow and Cardiff Castles mark stages in the conquest of south Wales. The three earldoms of Chester, Shrewsbury, and Hereford were founded by the Conqueror to form a line of defence against the Welsh. But defence soon turned to attack. First under the three chief earls, afterwards under lesser barons, the Norman conquest of Wales was pushed rapidly forward—until, early in the reign of Rufus, Arnulf of Montgomery reached the Irish Sea and founded Pembroke Castle (1090). But the early foundation of Pembroke did not mean that the whole of south Wales was conquered. On the contrary, the difficulty of holding down the Welsh, in a country where every hill harboured a rebel, was immense. Hence south Wales, and the border counties of Hereford, Monmouth, and Shropshire, are richer in Norman fortresses than all the rest of England put together. A cycle ride, say from Chepstow to Carmarthen, will reveal an astonishing number of these ruined fortresses, where either the original Norman mound, or some part of the later stonework, can be clearly seen.

The Welsh  
Border

## DATE SUMMARY: THE NORMANS

(1066-1154)

## ENGLAND AND NORMANDY

## EUROPE AND THE EAST

## WILLIAM I

1057-93 *Malcolm III of Scotland*

1066 ✕ HASTINGS

1069 Harrying of the North

1072 Capture of Ely

1073-85 Gregory VII Pope (Hildebrand)

1076 Turks capture Jerusalem

1085 DOMESDAY BOOK

1086 Oath of Salisbury

1087 William I *d.*

1086 Carthusian Order

## THE CONQUEROR'S SONS

1087-1100 William II

1090 Pembroke Castle built

1092 William II builds Carlisle Castle

1093 Anselm Archbishop

1096-9 FIRST CRUSADE

1098 Cistercian Order

1100-35 Henry I

1106 ✕ Tinchebrai

1118 Knights Templars

1120 Prince William *d.*1124-53 *David I of Scotland*1125 Emp. Henry V *d.*

## STEPHEN

1135 Stephen chosen King

1141 ✕ Lincoln

1147 Second Crusade

1151 Geoffrey of Anjou *d.*

1153 Treaty of Wallingford

1154 Stephen *d.*1153 St. Bernard *d.*

## V

### THE MONASTIC SYSTEM

#### I. *The Three Great Revivals*

THE tale of strife and bloodshed, which fills so much of feudal times, gives a very one-sided picture of the Middle Ages. The Castle tells one story; the Abbey another. For those less boisterous spirits who naturally shrank from the rough life of the day, there was the monastic career, with its ideal of service to God, and its welcome seclusion from a half-barbarous world. Little wonder that many of the noblest spirits of the Middle Ages turned towards this ideal.

The Christian monastic system has a history almost as long as that of Christianity itself. It first arose in the East, where pious men sought the shelter of the deserts of Egypt or Syria in order to live a life of contemplation. The earliest monks were hermits or anchorites, living apart from their fellows, and completely cut off from the world. Then, during the anarchy which arose in the Dark Ages after the fall of the Roman power in the West, many monks laboured to convert the heathen to the Christian faith. St. Patrick, and the Irish, Cornish, and Welsh saints, belong to this period.

St. Benedict, who lived about the same time as these missionaries, was the man who gave to the monastic life a form from which, in essentials, it never afterwards departed. "His 'Rule'" was the model for all later foundations. From his time, the old idea of the hermit life was abandoned in favour of the communal life—the monks living together in one group of buildings, under the direction of an abbot or prior. Monks came to be known as 'regular' clergy, i.e. those who were bound by a 'rule' (Latin, *regula*): other clerics, including parish priests, were called 'secular' clergy, i.e. those who lived in the world (Latin, *saeculum*) and not the cloister.

There were several monastic revivals<sup>2</sup> in later centuries.

<sup>1</sup> See above, pp. 39-41.

<sup>2</sup> It should of course be remembered that monasteries were an ever-present influence in England from the tenth century to the Reformation.

The three most important were those of the Cluniacs (founded 910), of the Carthusians (founded 1084), and of the Cistercians (founded 1098).

The  
Cluniac  
Revival

The Cluniac revival, as has been seen,<sup>1</sup> began with the foundation of Cluny in Burgundy, where a more strict observance of the 'Rule' was insisted upon. The Cluniacs were distinguished from the older Benedictine monasteries by the fact that all their houses were subject to the discipline of the parent Abbey at Cluny. Their reforms had a profound influence on western Europe, including Saxon England in Dunstan's time. This influence reached its height in the eleventh century, and culminated in the work of Hildebrand, who had studied at Cluny.

Carthu-  
sians, 1086

The last years of the eleventh century saw another revival. St. Bruno founded a new Order, known as the Carthusians (1086) from the name of the original monastery in the Grande Chartreuse, near Grenoble. The Carthusians united two hitherto separated ideals. They lived, as other monks did, in one community, in one building, and were ruled by an abbot; but they combined these arrangements with a reversion to the older idea of solitary contemplation. Their monasteries contained separate cells, where the monks spent the greater part of their time alone.<sup>2</sup> The silence of the days was broken only by the church services and by occasional meetings in the Chapter House. In spite of the strictness of their rule, the Carthusians fell short of their ideal far less than the other Orders.

Cistercians  
1098

The third revival was the Cistercian, the most successful of the new Orders, founded by Robert of Molême at the Abbey of Cîteaux, in Burgundy (1098).<sup>3</sup> The great St. Bernard, who was for forty years a remarkable power in Europe, was a member of this Order. Under his influence the Cistercians attained a world-wide celebrity; and St. Bernard himself was regarded

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 61.

<sup>2</sup> 'In passing through some of the cells of the Grande Chartreuse, noticing that the window of each cell looked across the little garden to the wall of the cell opposite, I asked a monk why the window was not rather made in the side of the cell whence it could open to the solemn fields of the Alpine valley. "We do not come here", he replied, "to look at the mountains."'—Ruskin, *The Stones of Venice*.

<sup>3</sup> The second Abbot of Cîteaux was Stephen Harding, an Englishman.

in his own lifetime with a greater reverence than Pope or Emperor. No decision which St. Bernard made was ever questioned; he was venerated by thousands, and was visited by kings; he appointed a Pope, and started a Crusade. Yet he was a simple-minded monk, whose enormous power rested solely on the fact that men, even the worst men, revered the monastic ideal, and recognized in St. Bernard its most perfect example. When he died (1153), there were 300 Cistercian monasteries in Europe, a number which was doubled during the next hundred years.

The Cistercian ideal of simplicity was applied even to the architecture of their abbeys and to the ornamentation of the church itself. That they might not be distracted by the society of other men, they chose sites for their monasteries remote from towns, in secluded valleys—like the Yorkshire dales—among the mountains and moors. The Cistercians were known as the White Monks, because they wore a robe of undyed wool, to distinguish them from the Black or Benedictine Monks.

The Cistercian was the last great monastic revival. The twelfth century was the period when the influence of monasticism was at its height; the life of St. Bernard marks its culminating point. After this there was a reaction against the severely ascetic life of the Cistercians, and they, and the older Orders (except the Carthusians), began to fall away from their ideals. The simplicity which St. Bernard had enjoined was often forgotten; the abbeys became famed for their riches, and for the costly ornaments of gold and silver which decorated their churches, and even the vessels of their table. The habits of the monks showed, in other ways, a decline from their former virtues. But it must be remembered that the monasteries flourished in a more barbarous age than ours. Monastic life, even in its decline, contrasted favourably with life outside, where conduct, judged by modern standards, was incredibly loose.

Finally, it was the monks, more than any other people, who in the early days before the foundation of universities kept alive the spirit of learning. Monastic libraries preserved precious manuscripts, which, by the labours of the monks,

Work of  
the monks

were copied out for the use of future generations. It is to the monastic chroniclers and scribes that we owe much of our knowledge of the history of the Middle Ages. In England the successive historians of St. Alban's Abbey, of whom the greatest was Matthew Paris (Henry III's reign), wrote the history of their own times. Similar chronicles were written at Canterbury, Worcester, Winchester, Peterborough, and Durham.

## 2. *The English Monasteries*

**Glaston-**  
**bury** The oldest English monastery is Glastonbury, said to have been founded by the British Christians who survived the Saxon invasions. Glastonbury was a great meeting-place for the Irish monks; they instructed St. Dunstan, who afterwards became its Abbot (943). Later, in Henry II's time, there was extensive rebuilding at Glastonbury; the Chapel of St. Mary, the most perfect of the ruins that remain, was built then (1186). The other buildings were magnificent, but they nearly all perished in the pillage that followed the Reformation.

**First Bene-**  
**dictines in**  
**England** The history of Glastonbury, stretching from Celtic Britain to Tudor England, covers a thousand years. But Glastonbury, owing to its position in the extreme west, is exceptional. Most other English monasteries were founded either by the Saxon or Norman kings or their nobles. The Rule of St. Benedict was introduced into England by St. Augustine (597). The flourishing monasteries of Northumbria, where Bede worked (673-735), belong to the period of the Saxon Heptarchy. Alfred's reign was a great victory over those enemies of European civilization, the Danes, and an impetus to both religion and learning; the famous annual record, the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, which he began, was the work of monks. Under his successors, the Saxon kings of England, many monasteries were founded, including Winchester, Peterborough, and Bury St. Edmunds.

The reforms of St. Dunstan marked a great advance of the Benedictine Order in England. A century later the Norman rulers continued this advance, and some of the noblest monastic buildings which still survive were then raised (see pp. 117, 118).





century, it is usually only the church and sometimes the cloisters which have been allowed to stand. For the rest, we have only ruins: and it is among the ruins that we must form our picture of the glorious abbeys of medieval England, some of the noblest creations of the Age of Faith and indeed of all ages. Westminster remains, and the monastic cathedrals remain; but many once great houses are irrevocably destroyed.

Austin Canons In Henry I's reign the Austin Canons came to England, called because they followed the Rule of St. Augustine of Hippo. They were monks in all but name. Their houses were

numerous in England, and include the beautiful Bolton Abbey, Yorkshire, and the monastery of St. Frideswide, Oxford, afterwards Oxford Cathedral. Many of their priories were hospitals rather than monasteries; such was the famous St. Bartholomew's Hospital at Smithfield, dating from Henry I's reign, and still surviving as 'Bart's'.

St. Bartholomew's Hospital

### 3. *Daily Life of a Monastery*

The best way of picturing the daily life of a monastery is to pay a visit to a monastic ruin. There are several abbeys suitable for this purpose; one of the best is Tintern, situated in the beautiful valley of the Wye. Tintern was a Cistercian house, founded in the twelfth century (1131) by the lord of Chepstow. The Abbey was rebuilt and enlarged about a century later, when the present buildings were begun. The cloisters and other buildings belong to the thirteenth century; the church to the fourteenth century.

Tintern Abbey

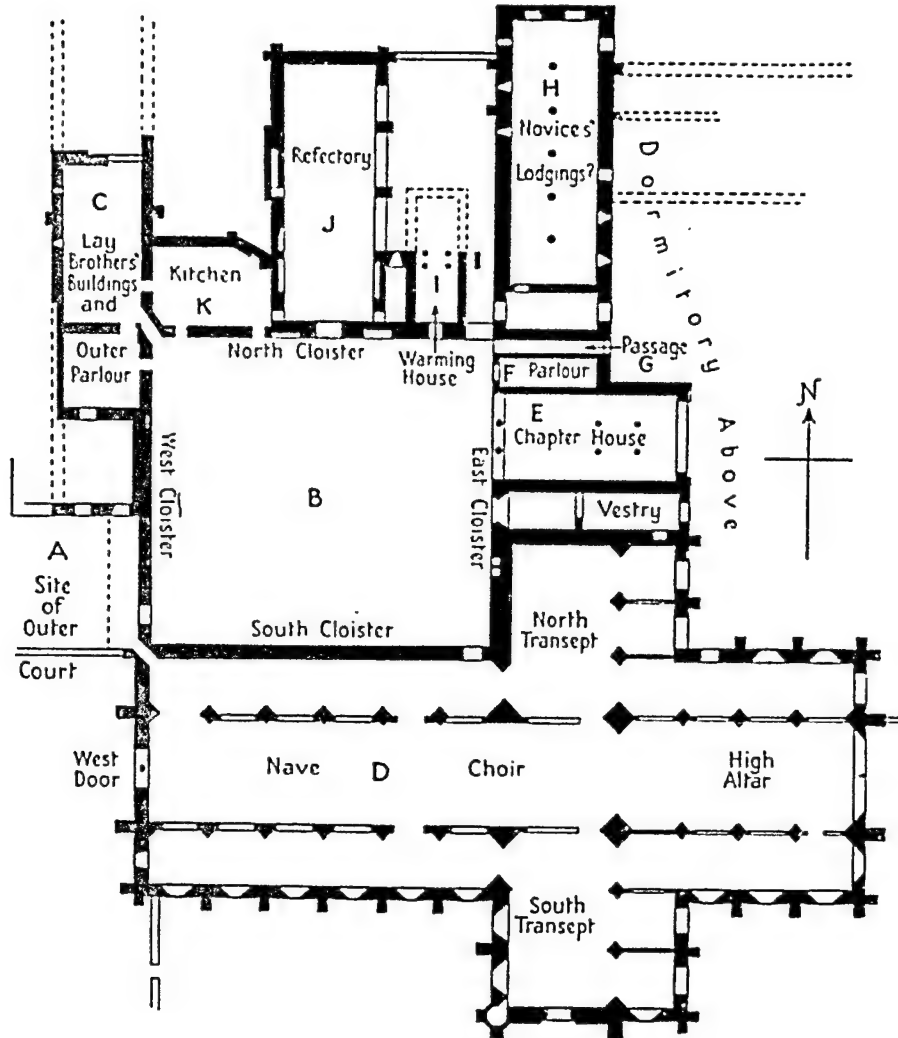
We approach Tintern from the west, and notice first the site of some buildings (A) which once formed the outer court of the monastery. It was here that the dealings between the monks and the outside world took place. Here stood the main gateway, with the almoner's lodge beside it; for it was part of the business of the monastery to distribute alms to the poor and needy. The rest of the outer buildings were taken up by the Abbot's house, where the Abbot entertained his guests, the hospitium or guests' lodgings, and the stables for their horses. Monastic entertainment was sometimes conducted on a large scale, since the monastery was the medieval hotel, used by all who could afford to travel. The guests were received



TINTERN ABBEY

by the hosteller, whose duty it was 'to be careful that perfect propriety should be found in his department—the whole Guest House kept clean of spiders' webs and dirt and strewn with rushes under foot'.

The Guest House



PLAN OF TINTERN ABBEY

So far we have not entered the monastery proper. Let us do so by the west gate of the cloister. The cloister was, apart from the church, the centre of the life of the abbey; it was here that the monks spent their hours of study. It was built in the form of a hollow square with a covered-in and paved walk, and

The Cloister

it enclosed a lawn or garden (B). The west side of the cloister at Tintern is taken up by a group of buildings (C) probably occupied by the lay brethren, who were largely employed in Cistercian monasteries to do manual work. At Tintern the church is built on the south of the cloister, not on the north, as was the more usual practice. The church (D) was the most important part of the buildings, since the abbey existed primarily for the purpose of worship. There were normally seven services during the day, not counting Mass. The Church

On the east of the cloister stood the council-chamber or Chapter House (E), where the monks met after High Mass for the discussion of any matters affecting the daily routine of the monastery. Next to the Chapter House at Tintern is a parlour (F), then a passage (G), leading to the infirmary, which stood at some distance from the other buildings. At the north-east corner of the cloister are the remains of another building (H), perhaps the novices' lodgings. The novices were boys who entered the monastery with the object of receiving an education and of training for the monastic life. This monastic school was not open (as in Saxon times) to boys who did not intend to embrace the life of the cloister. Monastic School

Over all these buildings, from the novices' lodgings right up to the church (see plan), ran the monks' dormitory, so placed that the brethren might descend by a stairway to the church for the midnight service. Turning to the north cloister at Tintern, we find the common-room (I), which contained the chief (in early times the only) fireplace in the monastery; and then the refectory (J), where the monks dined, and the kitchen (K) next door. The refectory was arranged, like a college hall, with a high table at one end, for the abbot and the chief officers of the monastery. There was a pulpit near by, from which one of the brethren read aloud at meals. On fast days, every Wednesday and Friday, and all Lent, fish was eaten instead of meat. But, in spite of fasts, the fare was luxurious in the wealthier monasteries, especially in later medieval times. The Refectory

Buildings which (like the almonry for the distribution of alms and the guest-house) no longer exist at Tintern are the scriptorium and the library. The scriptorium was a building The Scriptorium

set apart for the writing of books, and some of the manuscripts thus made or copied were placed in the library. Many of these precious documents perished in the vandalism of the Reformation, but some have been preserved in our museums. These manuscripts were often finely illustrated by pictures of saints, or of more familiar subjects such as animals and flowers, often quaintly drawn and painted in glowing rich colours.

To sum up, the monastery existed first of all for men to devote their lives to prayer and praise; hence the church was the main building. The secondary objects of monastic life were study, the writing of books, the education of novices, the giving of alms, the entertainment of guests, and the cultivation of the soil (by lay brethren); and we are reminded of these things by the cloister, the scriptorium, and the novices', guests', and lay brothers' lodgings. Lastly, the needs of ordinary daily life were met by the dormitory, the refectory, and the kitchen.

The arrangement by which the monastic buildings were grouped round the cloister has been followed in the plan of many schools and colleges, substituting the quadrangle for the cloister.

## APPENDIX

### *Monastic remains in England*

The first Cluniac house founded in England was at Barnstaple (Devon), but St. Pancras, at Lewes in Sussex (1077), was the foremost Cluniac house in England. Henry I was a great patron of the Cluniacs; he founded Reading Abbey (1121). After his death in France his body was brought to Reading for burial. His bones rested there until they were scattered in the reign of Edward VI, when Reading Abbey was destroyed.

There were only nine Carthusian monasteries in England, of which the best known is the London Charterhouse, converted into a Public School after the Dissolution.

The Cistercian houses were much more numerous; the first was founded (1128) at Waverley in Surrey in Henry I's reign. The Cistercian abbeys were all built in lonely places, and the labour of the monks often converted what was formerly a wilderness into a prosperous countryside. The settlement of the Cistercians in the Yorkshire dales led not only to the building of beautiful abbeys,<sup>1</sup> but to the beginning of the Yorkshire sheep-rearing industry. It was the Cistercian monks who began the sheep-farms to which Yorkshire owes so much of its prosperity. The situation of their abbeys, usually in places not only solitary but singularly beautiful, gives to their ruins a special charm. Vale Crucis (Denbighshire), Buildwas (Shropshire), Furness (Lancashire), Beaulieu (Hampshire), Buckfast (Devonshire), and above all Tintern, on the banks of the Wye, may be compared with the famous Cistercian group in Yorkshire (see map, p. 113). Among the Benedictine monasteries once imposing but now in ruins are Crowland, Evesham, Pershore, Whitby, and St. Mary's, York (see map). A similar fate has overtaken the great Cistercian abbeys of Yorkshire, together with all the smaller abbeys and priories throughout England. 'How silent now; all departed, clean gone.'<sup>2</sup>

Those monastic churches that have survived owe this to one of several causes. First, there are eight cathedrals which were associated with medieval monasteries (all Benedictine except Carlisle)—Canterbury, Rochester, Winchester, Worcester, Norwich,

<sup>1</sup> Fountains, Jervaulx, Rievaulx, and Byland.

<sup>2</sup> Carlyle, musing in *Past and Present*, on 'these old St. Edmundsbury walls'.

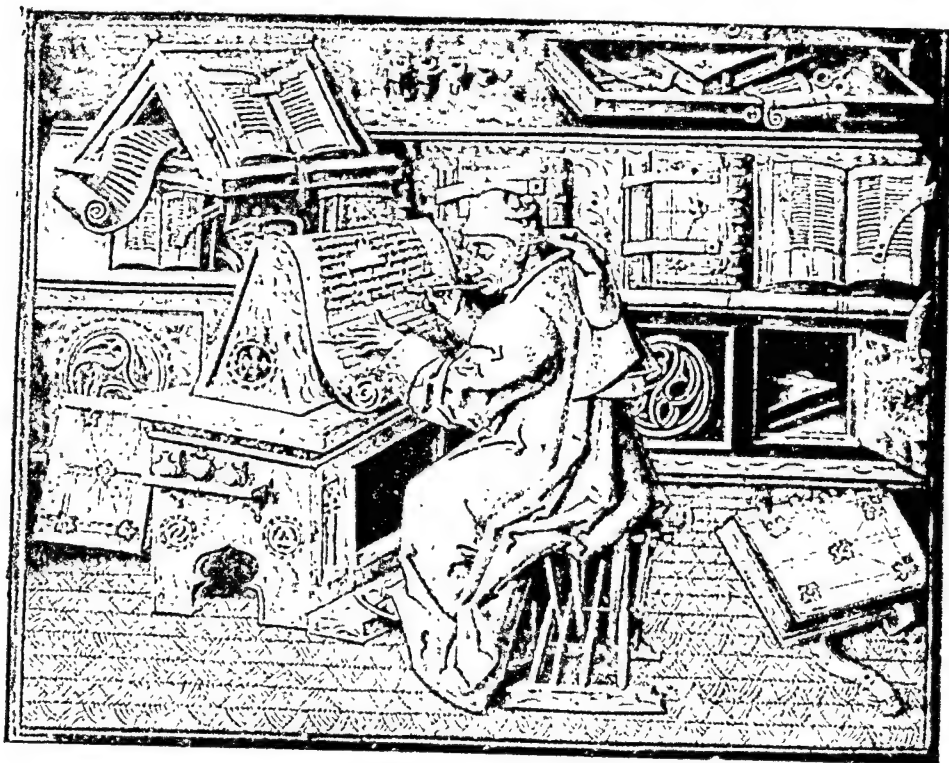
Cluniacs

Carthusians

Cistercians

Some  
Cathedrals  
formerly  
Monasteries

Ely, Durham, and Carlisle. All these cathedrals were, contrary to the ordinary Catholic practice, usually served by monks instead of secular clergy. These cathedrals were all preserved at the Reformation, though the monasteries attached to them were dissolved. Secondly, there are five cathedrals—Peterborough, Gloucester, Oxford, Bristol, and Chester—which were formerly ordinary monasteries, but which became cathedrals at the Reformation. Westminster Abbey owes its preservation to the fact that Henry VIII made it into the seat of a bishopric; and, though the bishopric was shortly afterwards suppressed, the Abbey was allowed to stand. Thirdly, some abbey churches were converted into parish churches at the Reformation; among such are Tewkesbury, Malmesbury, Romsey, Sherborne, and St. Albans (since made into a cathedral). Lastly, as at Sherborne and Repton, some of the monastic buildings have been preserved in the form of a school.



A MONASTIC SCRIBE AT WORK



## VI

### HENRY II AND RICHARD I

#### 1. *The Plantagenets*

THE rise of the House of Anjou to a commanding position in western Europe was one of the most rapid and spectacular in history. In 1137 Geoffrey Plantagenet<sup>1</sup> was merely Count of Anjou and Maine: twenty years later his son Henry was lord of two-thirds of France and King of England. Geoffrey himself was an ambitious man. While his wife Matilda was trying (1135-52) to wrest the English crown from King Stephen, Count Geoffrey employed his time in conquering the Duchy of Normandy. The year after Count Geoffrey died, his son Henry married (1152) Eleanor, heiress of Aquitaine, who had just been divorced by her first husband, Louis VII of France. Eleanor's marriage to Henry overthrew the balance of power between England and France, for his wife's dowry, together with his own inheritance in Normandy and Anjou, gave Henry control of the western half of France (see map, p. 120). Two years after his marriage he succeeded Stephen as King of England (1154), and so became lord of all the land from the Tweed to the Pyrenees.

Geoffrey of Anjou

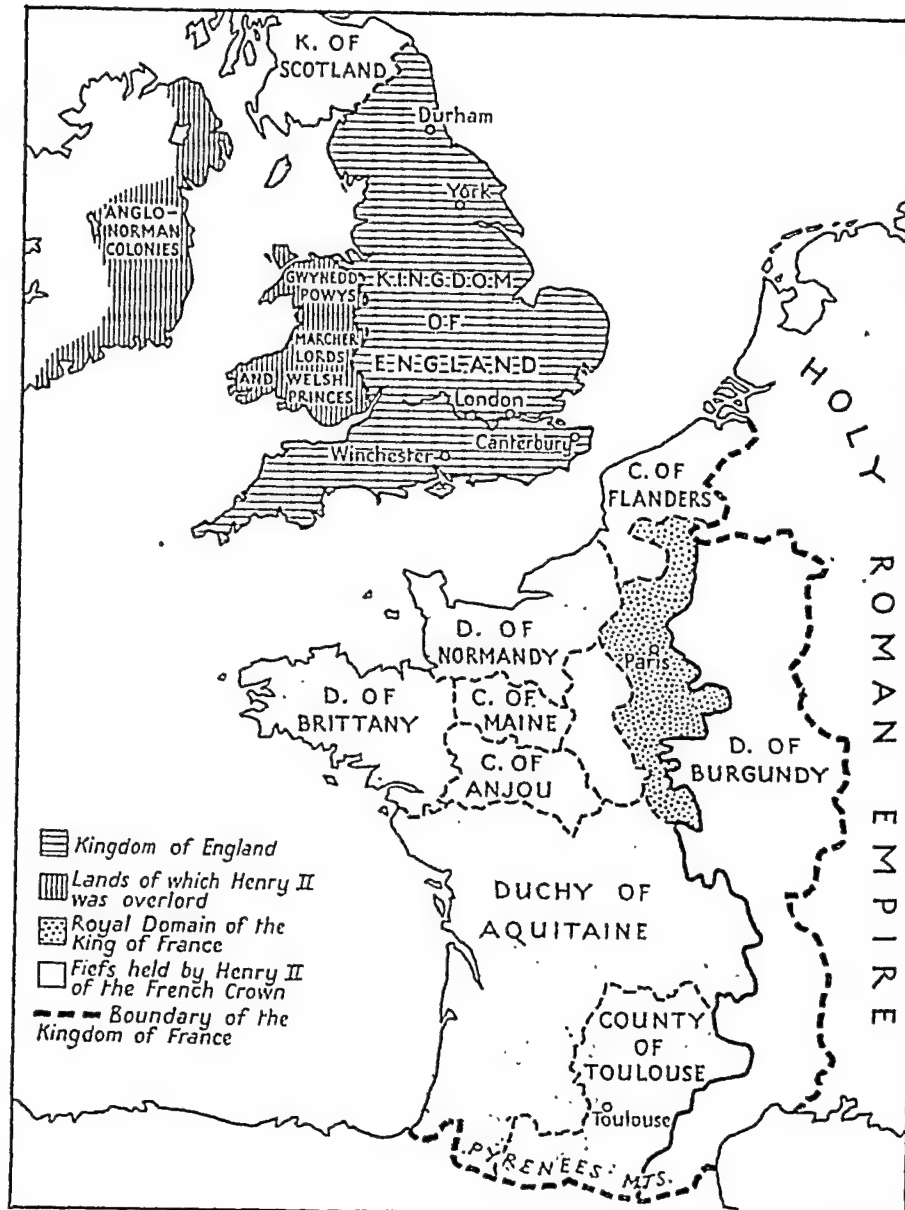
Henry of Anjou

Henry's accession, which placed the Plantagenet dynasty on the English throne, gave to England a line of remarkable kings. They were all able men, yet most of them were unfortunate. Henry II was one of the ablest of his line; he has left his mark for ever on England and on her laws. So strong a tradition of royal supremacy did he establish that it stood the strain even of the reigns of those inefficient sons of his, Richard I and John. But Henry II's loveless marriage brought its own bitter reward in domestic unhappiness and ungrateful sons; and the king who had moulded England to his will died at the last unloved and almost unmourned.

Henry II (1154-89)

His wide French possessions naturally led Henry to spend a His activity

<sup>1</sup> Plantagenets, so called from their badge, a sprig of broom—*planta genista*.



THE BRITISH ISLES AND FRANCE, SHOWING THE ANGEVIN DOMINIONS, 1173

good deal of time in his native land. Nevertheless, by his strong rule he soon brought order into English affairs. With ceaseless activity he journeyed through the length and breadth of the land, ready to pounce upon some false sheriff or rebellious lord. His chaplain tells how 'if the king decides to spend the day

anywhere, you may be sure he will get off early in the morning, and this sudden change will throw every one into confusion. Then you may see men running about like mad, urging on the pack-horses, driving chariots one into another, all in confusion as if hell had been let loose. . . .’ The barons at once realized that they were dealing with a master. So they submitted with little resistance to the king’s order to pull down the unlicensed castles erected in Stephen’s reign. The day of feudal anarchy in England was over.

## 2. *St. Thomas of Canterbury*

When he had restored peace to a country sadly in need of that blessing, Henry’s orderly mind turned to the problem of the administration of his kingdom. The most famous of his ministers was Thomas Becket. The son of a London merchant and one of Archbishop Theobald’s clerks, Becket was raised from obscurity by the king’s influence and was made Chancellor of England (1154). He became Henry’s greatest personal friend and principal adviser. He lived in great magnificence; his house was resplendent with gold and silver, and he gave entertainments the cost of which he did not trouble to consider.

Thomas  
Becket

When Becket was made Archbishop of Canterbury (1162) all this was changed. He adopted an ascetic mode of life which contrasted strongly with his former luxury as a courtier. More important still was the change in his relations with the king. Becket had warned Henry that ‘Man cannot serve two masters’, that if he became head of the Church in England their friendship would be strained; and so indeed it proved. The two men were well matched: Henry was imperious, masterful, determined to bend all England to his will; but Becket was imperious too, and regarded it as his duty to resist the king in the name of the Church.

It has been seen that William I had separated the Church Courts<sup>1</sup> from the civil courts. Henry II wished all his people to be subject to the king’s law, and his policy was to assert the royal supremacy against the Church as well as against feudal privilege. The main clash with the Church arose over the question of criminous clerks. It was now claimed by the

Church  
Courts

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 90.

Church that erring clerks in holy orders should be tried by the Church Courts, even if they had committed criminal offences. This custom was called 'benefit of clergy'. The Church Courts could not punish even murderers except by imposing a penance, or by degradation from office, and so Henry complained that 'it took two crimes to hang a priest'. The matter was made worse by the fact that, besides the monks and the parish clergy, there was a whole host of officials in 'minor orders' to whom the Church extended her protection. In fact, almost any man endowed with the unusual gift of being able to read and write might call himself a 'clerk'.

The year after Becket became archbishop, a clerk who had committed a murder was let off with a light sentence. Henry determined to take action. He announced that in dealing with criminal clergy he proposed to return to the custom that had obtained in the time of Henry I, and he demanded the archbishop's assent. Thomas gave a vague assent but, when he met Henry and his Council at Clarendon, 'he regretted having made this concession to the king. Wishing to withdraw from his promise, he said that he had sinned greatly in ever yielding, but that he would sin no farther.' Henry then produced what he regarded as the ancient customs of the realm, and these afterwards became known as the 'Constitutions of Clarendon'. The document included some clauses concerning ancient disputes, for example that cases tried by the archbishop's court could not be referred to Rome without the king's leave.<sup>1</sup> On the main question of criminal clerks, Henry proposed that clerks who had been found guilty by the Church Courts, and degraded from their orders, should then be handed over to the civil courts for punishment. He demanded that the archbishop should set his seal to the Constitutions (1164): Becket refused, adding that 'God does not judge a man twice for the same offence'. Henry, extremely angry, summoned the archbishop to another Council at Northampton. Becket arrived, went to the church, said Mass, and then, taking his archbishop's cross in his hand, waited on the king. Henry refused to see him, but sent the Earl of Leicester to demand his submission. 'Robert,' said Becket when the earl appeared, 'by the allegiance which

Constitu-  
tions of  
Clarendon  
1164

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 90.

you owe me as your spiritual father, I forbid you to speak.' The earl hesitated, and Becket swept out of the hall. His defiance was complete, but it was not safe to remain in England. He left the kingdom in disguise, and remained in exile in France for six years (1164-70).

Becket in  
exile  
1164-70

Abroad, he sought the help of the Pope, who, however, was too busily engaged in his own struggle with the Emperor Frederic I to afford Becket much support. Henry, for his part, seized the revenues of the See of Canterbury, and Becket replied by excommunicating the king and all his ministers. At the end of six years the quarrel was patched up, and Thomas was allowed to return (December 1170). Unfortunately, a new cause of disagreement now arose, for Henry had caused his heir, Prince Henry, to be crowned king by the Archbishop of York during Becket's absence. This was an affront which Becket would not pass over in silence. As soon as he reached England, he demanded a confession of their fault from all the bishops who had taken part in the coronation, and followed this up by excommunicating certain of the king's barons. When this news reached Henry in France, he flew into a black rage. 'Are there none of the dastards eating my bread who will rid me of this turbulent priest?' he cried. The words did not fall on deaf ears; four knights rose from his table determined to give to Henry's hasty, wrathful words a literal interpretation. They took ship to England, and proceeded at once to Canterbury (1170).

Becket's  
return and  
new quarrel

It was the evening of the 29 December; vespers were being sung in the Cathedral. The monks, hearing the approach of the knights, wished to bar the doors, but Becket said: 'It is not meet to make a fortress of the house of prayer.' The knights entered, with swords drawn, and those who had been singing vespers 'ran hither to the dreadful spectacle'. The monks tried to hide Becket, but he fearlessly approached his adversaries, who cried out: 'Where is Thomas Becket, traitor to the king and realm?' He came forward and replied: 'I am here, no traitor to the king, but a priest. Why do ye seek me?' Then they laid sacrilegious hands upon him, while he vainly strove, by clinging to a pillar, to avoid capture. But one of the knights struck him with his sword on the crown of the

Murder of  
Becket, 1170

head, cutting off part of the scalp. Other blows followed. Becket fell to his knees and cried out: 'For the name of Jesus, and the protection of the Church, I am ready to embrace death.' The murderers struck again; and, to the horror of the beholders, the blood of the archbishop stained the steps of the altar. 'Let us away, knights,' said one of the murderers, 'he will never rise again.'

The thrill of horror caused throughout Christendom by this murder and this sacrilege reacted on the king. Henry sent his ambassador to the Pope to protest his ignorance of the murderers' intentions. But the Pope would not absolve Henry from his sin till he had renounced the clause of the 'Constitutions' dealing with appeals to Rome (1172). Finally Henry performed a spectacular public penance, praying before the altar where his victim had perished and permitting his royal body to be scourged by the monks. Henceforth, till the Reformation, criminous clerks were protected from the royal wrath and justice by the shadowy form of the martyred archbishop lying in Canterbury Cathedral.

Henry's penance  
St. Thomas canonized  
The Pope canonized Becket, and to the shrine of St. Thomas of Canterbury men came 'from every shire's end'. His name became a legend, a wonder; miracles wrought at his tomb were reported almost as soon as he was dead. St. Thomas at once became the most popular saint of England because he was a hero of England. The king may have been right and Becket wrong; but the king appeared to be a tyrant, and Becket the brave archbishop who alone had dared to oppose him in the name of the Church. The people may bow to tyrants, but they love those—even if they are as arrogant and aggressive as Becket—who withstand them. Herein lies the secret of St. Thomas's hold on popular affection for four centuries.

### 3. *The Work of Henry II*

The quarrel with Becket formed but one incident, though an important one, in Henry's thirty-five years' reign; he did not entirely succeed in getting his own way in the Becket controversy, but he succeeded in almost everything else.<sup>1</sup> The

<sup>1</sup> Becket as Chancellor was the minister to whom he gave his fullest confidence. But the office of Justiciar, though filled by men who played

constitution and laws of England have not been made by any one man or body of men at one particular time, as happened in France and in America; in England these things have grown up slowly. But it was Henry II and his ministers who shaped a reasoned system of law for the whole land and determined the form in which it should grow after their time.

The Reign  
of Law

Feudalism, as we have seen, placed the vast majority of the population under the control of local barons, whose power under a weak king like Stephen exceeded that of the central government. Henry II succeeded a king, Stephen, in whose reign the barons did much as they pleased. Henry not only gave the country order instead of anarchy; he so extended the working of the central government that the power of the Crown was felt by every man in England.

The centre of government was the King's Court—*Curia Regis*—and the increase in its power is the key to Henry II's work. In Henry I's time the Exchequer Court—the first offshoot of *Curia Regis*—had been set up to deal with the financial affairs of the realm. The Exchequer now became the heart of the government. Most of the men engaged in the king's business—Justiciar, Chancellor, Constable, Chamberlain, Marshal, Treasurer, and other 'discreet men sent by the king'—met at the exchequer board. Under Henry II *Curia Regis* 'branched like a living tree', and the Court of Common Pleas<sup>1</sup> took shape during his rule.

The  
Exchequer  
Court

But the sitting of the King's Court (or Courts) was not enough to establish justice in England. In the first place, the

a less spectacular part in history than Becket, was one of great importance, for he presided over the Exchequer and was recognized as ruler of the kingdom during the king's many absences in France. It was through his Justiciars—Robert, Earl of Leicester, Richard de Luci, and Ranulf Glanvill—that Henry carried out his many legal reforms.

<sup>1</sup> The *Court of Common Pleas* heard the appeals of the numerous lords and other freemen who brought their pleas before the king's judges. After *Magna Carta* it sat permanently at Westminster, to save its suitors the trouble and expense of following the king on his incessant journeys. The *Court of King's Bench* did not take shape till after Henry II. It was so called from the raised seat or bench in Westminster Hall (built by Rufus) on which the King used to sit when his officials were summoned in *curiam regis* (into the King's Court). Criminals are still tried in a Court of King's Bench (though no longer sitting in Westminster Hall).

King's Court was held wherever the king happened to be; and, as he was constantly on the move, it was a difficult business to follow him.<sup>1</sup> Even when some Courts were permanently set up at Westminster, it was an expensive matter for some people to come to London. But, if the people could not come to the Court, the Court could go to the people. Henry I had begun the use of itinerant or travelling justices. By the famous Assize<sup>2</sup> of Clarendon (1166), Henry II regularized this system, which still continues in our present-day assize courts. He instructed his judges to tour the shires at regular intervals to inquire into the king's rights, to assess taxes in each county, and to inspect the work of the sheriffs and even of the barons' own courts. Thus through these itinerant justices he brought the local machinery of shire and hundred into close relations with the central government.

Assize of  
Clarendon  
1166

Beginnings  
of the Jury  
System

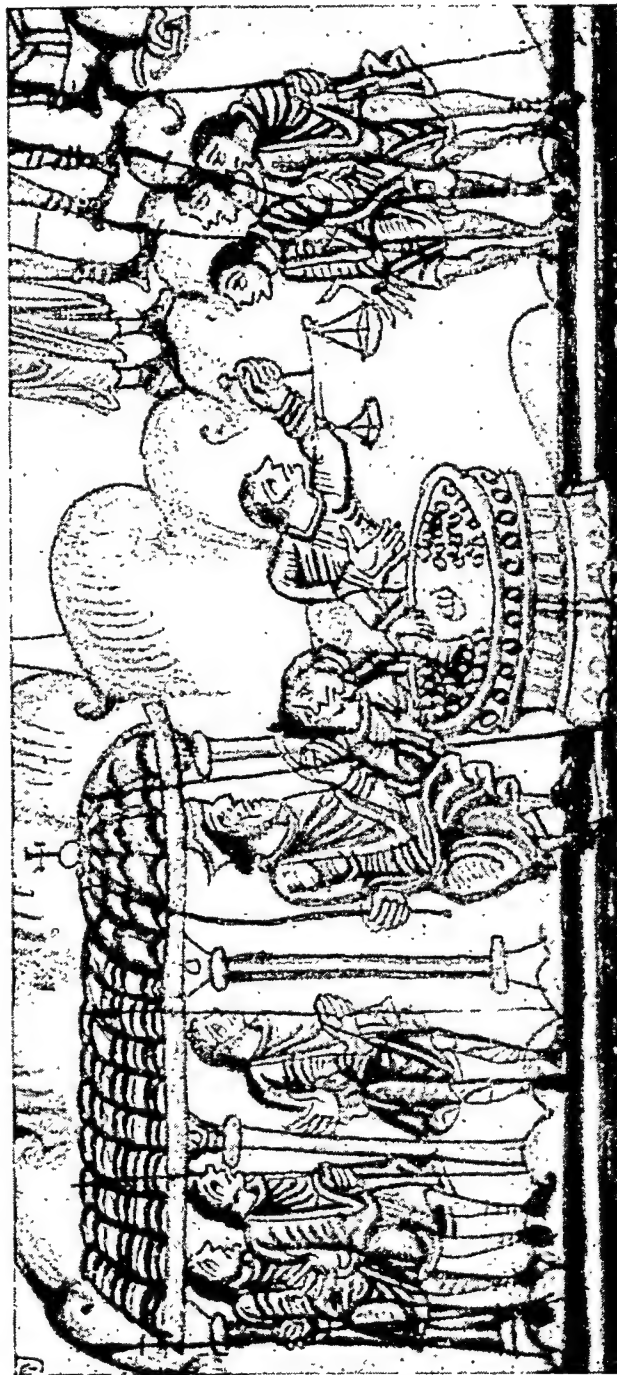
By this same Assize of Clarendon a further step was taken to organize the Jury System. Twelve law-abiding men from each hundred, and four from each village in the shire, were required to declare on oath whether any one in their shire was 'suspected' of being a robber or murderer since Henry became king; and they were to 'present' the suspects to the king's judges in the Shire Court. This body of neighbours became known as the 'jury', that is, men sworn (*juré*) or put on oath to answer questions which the king's officials put to them.

This employment of a jury was not new. William I had used juries to ascertain facts and rights for the Domesday Survey—and to answer questions such as 'what was the state of this piece of land and what was it worth in Edward the Confessor's time?' Henry II greatly developed the use of the jury. He employed it for all kinds of business—not only for *criminal* cases ('what persons are suspected of being murderers, or robbers, or false-coiners?'), but also for *civil* cases, concerning the possession of land ('has Hugh or Ralph the greater right

<sup>1</sup> Richard of Anesty followed Henry II for five years through most parts of England, Normandy, Aquitaine, and Anjou, till at last he won his case. But it was a ruinous success, as he had to borrow money from the Jews at 86½ per cent. But his case was probably an exception. (Quoted by McKechnie, *Magna Carta*.)

<sup>2</sup> *Assize*, i.e. a royal decree issued in an 'assize' (or sitting) of notables.





THE EXCHEQUER WEIGHING COIN IN THE KING'S PRESENCE

A drawing in a manuscript of the twelfth century.

to this land?'), and again for *administrative* and fiscal affairs ('what profits—forfeitures, treasure-trove, etc.—have fallen to the Crown; what are the misdoings of the sheriff and his bailiffs?'). The use of juries and their election in the local courts was an important step towards self-government.

Henry II's juries, it should be noted, were 'witnesses'<sup>1</sup> only of one fact—the fact that the persons they presented were 'suspected' of certain offences. The actual *trial* of a criminal was conducted in a manner which nowadays we might think barbarous enough. The Normans favoured the custom of trial by Combat, by which the victor in a fight was judged to be in the right. There was also an older custom, trial by Ordeal, by which the accused had to carry a hot iron for a certain number of paces; if after three days the scar was found to be festering the accused was guilty, but if the scar was clean, then he was innocent. The Ordeal, we must remember, was a religious ceremony, an appeal to the supernatural, and it was the normal procedure in early law. Gradually these ancient customs fell into disuse, and in due course Pope Innocent III abolished the Ordeal (1215).

When the Ordeal was no longer available to settle the guilt or innocence of the suspect, the king's judges began to have recourse to a jury, who were asked to state on oath, and to pronounce a verdict, whether the person presented as suspect was really guilty. This *jury of trial* of later times came to be known as the Petty Jury (which is still in use), to distinguish it from the 'accusing' jury or *jury of presentment* which came to be known as the Grand Jury (now abolished). Our medieval ancestors, however, did not always think trial by jury a just plan, and those who refused to answer how they would be tried might be starved or pressed to death with weights (a form of torture known as the *peine forte et dure*).

Henry II took several steps to limit the power of the barons. Early in his reign he instituted 'shield-money' or Scutage (1159), by which feudal magnates paid the king money instead of bringing their sub-tenants to his army, thus enabling him

<sup>1</sup> Contrast Henry II's juries with the *modern jury*, who are not supposed to know anything of the case, or of each other, till they come into court.

to hire mercenaries who would be loyal to him and not to the barons. In 1170 he sent round justices to inquire into the conduct of the sheriffs (Inquest of Sheriffs). As a result of this a good many barons were removed from the sheriffdom and replaced by royal officials from the Exchequer. Towards the end of his reign Henry issued the Assize of Arms (1181), by which he directed all the freemen in England to furnish themselves with arms according to their means. Thus he revived and re-armed the Saxon fyrd or national army. He saw that an army of freemen, called up by the sheriffs, would be a useful safeguard against foreign invasion or baronial revolt, and more dependable than a feudal array.

Second rebellion, 1158

Assize of Arms, 1181

Assize of Arms,

of I

To sum up Henry II's reforms: though he was the French-speaking lord of great dominions (of which England was but one part), Henry II organized, from the King's Court as centre, a system of law for our whole land. He may be called the father of our system of Law Courts and of the jury system—though the jury of his time was not the jury we know to-day. He attracted men to the King's Court by giving them more expert and cheaper justice than the local courts of manors, hundreds, or shires. Two important results followed. First, there grew up the idea of the King's Court as the fountain of Justice, the beginning of the idea of the majesty of the law, which is one of the distinctive marks of English life. Secondly, the decisions of the king's judges, which were written down, formed valuable precedents; they became the basis of what is called the Common Law of England.

Importance of Henry's work

In one part of these islands the reign of Henry II saw the opening of a troubled page of history. The connexion between England and Ireland began in this king's reign. The English entered Ireland in 1170, on what proved to be the beginning of their conquest of the country. Ireland in the twelfth century resembled Britain in the sixth century. It was ruled by tribal chiefs, of whom one was called High King of Ireland; five more were nominal heads of the provinces—Ulster, Munster, Leinster, Connaught, and Meath. There was continual fighting between the various tribes. One chieftain, Dermot Macmurrough, King of Leinster, invited the help of an Anglo-Norman baron from Wales, usually known as Strongbow, Earl

Ireland

of Pembroke. Strongbow landed in Ireland (1170), married Dermot's daughter, and succeeded him as King of Leinster. Henry II visited Ireland in the following year, and Strongbow did homage to him for Leinster; many Irish chiefs followed his example and acknowledged the English king as overlord of the island. Henry then left Ireland to Strongbow and his fellow adventurers. Later he meditated making the country into a subordinate kingdom for his youngest son; but Prince John's expedition to Ireland (1185) was a complete failure.

Henry II spent most of his time in travelling about his wide dominions, and in enforcing justice. His work was twice (1173-4, 1188-9) interrupted by the rebellion of his sons, who were encouraged by their mother. His eldest son, Henry, was crowned king during his father's lifetime, but the relations between father and son were not happy. The elder Henry's attempt to provide lands in France for his youngest and favourite son, John, provoked the younger Henry's rebellion (1173-4). There followed two summers of civil war, reminiscent of the days of Stephen. Many of the great Anglo-Norman barons, whose estates lay on both sides of the Channel, joined the younger Henry in an attempt to dethrone his father; but the old king was solidly supported by the lesser barons, the sheriffs, and the new ministerial class. The midlands, under the Earl of Leicester, were the centre of the rebellion in England, but the invasion of the Scottish king, William the Lion, rallied the north for Henry. The King of Scots was captured at Alnwick, forced to do homage to Henry, and to surrender some of his castles (Treaty of Falaise, 1174). In France the rebellion was more serious: the younger Henry was joined by his brothers, Geoffrey and Richard, by the King of France and by many of the barons of Brittany, Normandy, and Aquitaine, struggling for independence; but by the end of the following year this great feudal revolt was crushed.

The king's sons, however, remained dissatisfied with their share of the royal power, though Geoffrey had become Duke of Brittany by marrying the heiress, and Richard had been made ruler (1175) of Aquitaine. A few years later, however, the younger Henry died and Geoffrey followed him to an early grave. But Richard, now heir to the throne, could neither

First re-  
bellion of  
Henry's  
sons, 1173-4

wait for his inheritance, nor leave his father to enjoy his declining years in peace. He joined Philip Augustus, who had lately become King of France, in an alliance against Henry (1188). The old king took the field once more, was defeated, and forced by Richard and Philip to make peace. At this juncture he learnt that his favourite son John had joined the rebellion. It was a bitter blow, and thereafter the king lost all interest in the world. Shortly afterwards death (1189) ended an existence that was no longer endurable for the greatest and the wisest king in western Europe.

Second rebellion, 1158

Death of Henry II 1189

#### 4. *Richard I and England*

Richard I, the successor of Henry II, is chiefly remembered for his exploits in the Holy Land<sup>1</sup> and as the opponent of the courteous Saladin. He was born in England, but up to the age (32) when he came to the throne he had paid only two visits to his native land. He was a Frenchman by descent, by upbringing, and by interest. His only concern with England was to use that kingdom as a source of money supplies for his Crusading adventure. For this purpose he sold, often to the highest bidder, bishoprics, great offices of state, and claims to feudal jurisdiction. He also sold charters to towns. In return for a handsome payment he released the King of Scots from his oath of fealty (Treaty of Canterbury, 1189) and thus cancelled the Treaty of Falaise. Having made all these arrangements to his satisfaction, King Richard left for the Holy Land (1190). He took with him about forty ships, the first English navy to appear in the Mediterranean.

Richard I 1189-99

Sale of offices

After he had taken Acre, quarrelled with his fellow Crusaders, and made peace with Saladin, Richard returned home. On his way back (1192) he was taken prisoner by Leopold, Duke of Austria, whom he had offended. For his ransom 150,000 marks were required—an enormous sum in those days when coins were scarce. Most of this money was raised in England, by the exaction of a quarter of all land revenues and of the value of personal property. On regaining his liberty Richard paid a flying visit to England. Then he turned from his proper task of governing his kingdom to the more congenial business

Richard a prisoner

<sup>1</sup> See Section 5.

of war with a fellow Crusader, Philip of France, who had attacked Normandy in his absence. Prince John, who had also tried to seize Normandy, and had acted generally during Richard's captivity as though his brother were dead, was not punished as he deserved for his treachery. Richard merely deprived him of his lands, and spared his life, more out of contempt than mercy. For the remainder of his reign, Richard was occupied in France.

England during several years of Richard's reign was ruled by Hubert Walter, who combined the offices of Justiciar and Archbishop of Canterbury. It says much for Henry II's system of government that his servants made it work without a king at the head of affairs, and in spite of the excessive taxation which Richard demanded. Walter even carried Henry II's methods farther. He used juries in the shires for the assessment of land for taxation. He employed the knights of the shires to help keep the King's Peace in their counties, and in this we may see the origin of the Justices of the Peace, the local gentry of later times who did so much by way of local government. He also granted charters of self-government to various towns, on payment, of course, of a sum of money, and under him London first obtained the right of electing its own Mayor (1191). But the Justiciar Walter was unpopular in England, though it was not his fault that the absent king demanded a constant flow of money abroad—first for his Crusade, then for his ransom, then for his French war.

In 1199 the news of Richard's death was brought to England. He had been killed outside the castle of Chaluz, near the town of Limoges, which he was besieging. It cannot be supposed that Englishmen grieved overmuch at his death. Perhaps they might have done so had they known what was in store for them under his successor!

## 5. *Richard I and the Crusades*

### (i) *The Age of Chivalry and the Crusades.*

The First Crusade took place in the reign of William I of England—though there is little in the character of that king to remind us that he lived in an heroic period. But it is not

the brutal Rufus who stands as a pattern of medieval chivalry, Chivalry or even those wise kings Henry I and Henry II. For such a type we must look to the unfortunate Robert of Normandy, who lost a kingdom to go on a Crusade, to the weak-willed but knightly Stephen, and to Richard Cœur de Lion.

A knight was not merely a landholder who owed military The Knight service to his lord; he was also supposed to represent in his own person the ideal of Chivalry and to share 'the spiritual kinship of all true knights'. He went through a long and arduous training, which began when he entered his lord's household as a page. Here he waited at table and lived with the lord's family. At fourteen he became a squire, and, until he came of age, he followed his lord in this capacity in the hunting-field or the field of battle. At twenty-one, if judged worthy, he was dubbed a knight, either by the king or by some great lord, who girded him with a sword. This sword lay, during the night preceding the ceremony, before the altar of a church, where the knight-elect kept his vigil till daybreak:

Then by some secret shrine I ride;  
I hear a voice, but none are there;  
The stalls are void, the doors are wide,  
The tapers burning fair.  
Fair gleams the snowy altar-cloth,  
The silver vessels sparkle clean,  
The shrill bell rings, the censer swings,  
And solemn chaunts resound between.<sup>1</sup>

At the ceremony, when he was invested with sword, spurs, and coat of mail, the knight swore to guard the defenceless and to give his life, if need be, for the Christian faith. The knights whom we meet in the pages of Malory<sup>2</sup> typify these high ideals which we call 'Chivalry'—the *Morte d'Arthur* glows with the warmth and beauty of the knight's conception of chivalry and his love for the great deeds and great men of the visionary past. But we could scarcely expect to meet, in the actual medieval world, such perfect knights as Sir Lancelot or Sir Galahad.

<sup>1</sup> Tennyson, *Sir Galahad*.

<sup>2</sup> Sir Thomas Malory (died 1471). His *Morte d'Arthur* was printed by Caxton.

The Tour-  
nament When not engaged in actual war, knights often spent their time in the mock warfare of the tournament.<sup>1</sup> These contests drew great crowds, and were the medieval counterpart of the modern cricket or football match:

'It was a goodly sight [says Scott, describing such a scene] to behold so many gallant champions, mounted bravely, and armed richly, stand ready prepared for an encounter so formidable, seated on their war-saddles like so many pillars of iron. . . . As yet the knights held their long lances upright, their bright points glancing in the sun, and the streamers with which they were decorated fluttering over the plumage of the helmets. Thus they remained while the marshals of the field surveyed their ranks. . . . Then William de Wyvil, with a voice of thunder, pronounced the signal words—*Laissez aller!* The trumpets sounded as he spoke—the spears of the champions were at once lowered and placed in the rests—the spurs were dashed into the flanks of the horses, and the two foremost ranks of either party rushed at each other in full gallop, and met in the middle of the lists with a shock, the sound of which was heard at a mile's distance.'

The  
Crusades Chivalry found its highest ideal in the Crusades, the Holy Wars of the Cross. The First Crusade, which took place during Rufus's reign, deserves far more attention from the point of view of world history than any of the deeds or misdeeds of that monarch. To trace the causes of the Crusades, we must glance as far back as the age in which were living those very different contemporaries, St. Augustine and Mohammed. In the sixth century of the Christian era the Holy Land fell into the hands of the conquering Arabs—the early followers of the Prophet Mohammed,<sup>2</sup> the founder of Islam. By the end of the seventh century the Arabs had conquered the whole of the southern shores of the Mediterranean, and built up a great empire extending from the Straits of Gibraltar<sup>3</sup> to the Persian Gulf.

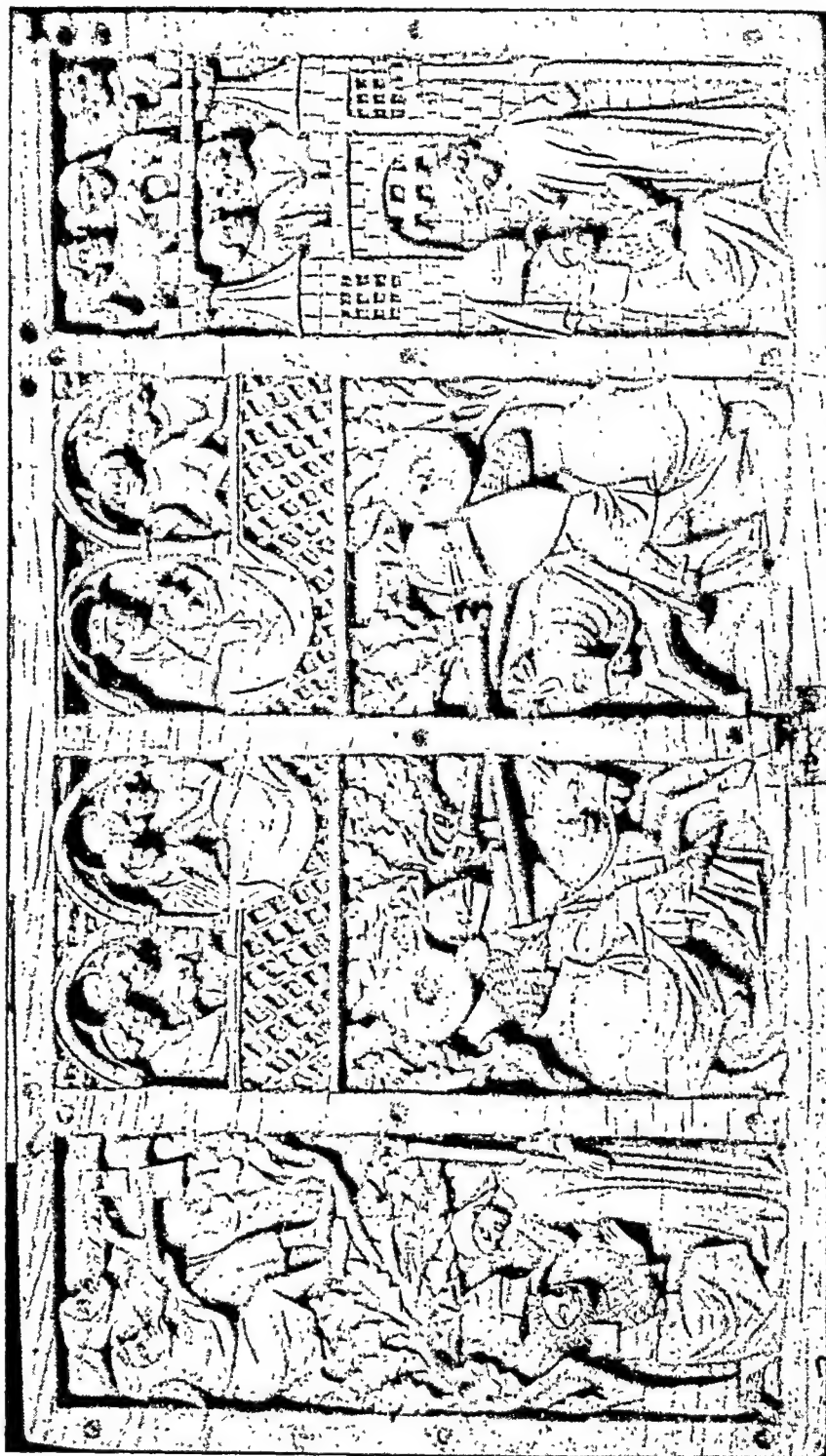
The  
Moslem  
World By the tenth century the Moslem dominions were split into three caliphates, those of Baghdad, Cairo, and Cordova. Each was distinguished for its civilization and learning. The schools

<sup>1</sup> See Scott, *Ivanhoe*, chapters 7 and 12.

<sup>2</sup> See above, p. 50.

<sup>3</sup> Spain was conquered in the eighth century.





#### THE AGE OF CHIVALRY

A medieval carving in ivory, depicting a tournament held outside a town, the gate of which can be seen on the right. Some of the spectators are watching from a kind of grand stand, others from the city walls.

of Cordova or Cairo could show a degree of culture vastly superior to anything to be found in the half-barbarous Europe of the early Middle Ages. In Spain, the fact that the Christians occupied the northern half of the country led to ceaseless warfare between Christian and Moor; but in the East relations were more friendly. The sea and the dominions of the Eastern Empire—with its capital at Constantinople—cut off western Europe from direct contact with Islam. But pilgrimages to the Holy Sepulchre at Jerusalem were not interfered with by the tolerant Arabs, who indeed regarded the Founder of Christianity with feelings of considerable reverence.

The Seljuk  
Turks

All this was changed by the advent of the Seljuk Turks. The peace of the Near East and of Europe had been disturbed several times in history by inroads of barbarians<sup>1</sup> from the plains of Tartary in Central Asia; and it was from there that the Turks came. They derived their name from one Seljuk, a Tartar chieftain. His grandson, the first great Turkish sultan, captured Baghdad (1055), made the Caliph a prisoner, and ruled in his name. The Turks soon conquered Persia, and then turned upon the Eastern Empire. They defeated the Emperor (1071), and Asia Minor passed into Turkish hands. They then conquered Syria and Palestine, and captured Jerusalem (1076).

Turks cap-  
ture Jeru-  
salem, 1076

The rise of the Turkish power had a profound effect upon world history, not only in Asia, but in Europe. The change from an Arab to a Turkish lord of western Asia was a change for the worse. The Turks professed Mohammedanism, but their adopted religion was a thin veneer which covered a real barbarism, inherited from their Tartar ancestors. The change was soon felt by the Christian pilgrims to Jerusalem, who were cruelly molested by the Turks—a fact which gave rise to the legend of Peter the Hermit, whose preaching was said to have kindled the enthusiasm for the First Crusade. Unless steps were taken to check the Turkish advance, the days of the Eastern Empire were evidently numbered. Baghdad—Antioch—Jerusalem—all had fallen; it would be the turn of Constantinople next. The Emperor therefore appealed to Hildebrand's

Ill-treat-  
ment of  
Christians

<sup>1</sup> e.g. the Huns, who helped to break up the Roman Empire (*c.* 450); the Magyars, who settled in Hungary (*c.* 900); and the Bulgars, who were among the invaders of the Eastern or Byzantine Empire (*c.* 950).

successor, Pope Urban II, to arouse all Europe to his aid. The Pope, realizing that, if Constantinople fell, Italy and the West and indeed all Christendom would be in danger, was quick to respond to the Emperor's appeal.

At the Council of Clermont (1095), Urban II discussed the project of a Holy War against the Turks. He also preached a sermon on the same subject to a vast crowd which, roused to a tremendous pitch of enthusiasm, broke into cries of '*Deus vult*' (God wills it). 'It is indeed the will of God,' replied the Pope, 'and let this memorable word, the inspiration surely of the Holy Spirit, be for ever adopted as your cry of battle, to animate the devotion and courage of the champions of Christ. His Cross is the symbol of your salvation; wear it, a red, a bloody cross, as an external mark on your breasts or shoulders, as a pledge of your sacred and irrevocable engagement.'<sup>1</sup>

Council of  
Clermont  
1095

The result of Pope Urban II's action was the First Crusade. The Pope's example was followed by thousands of preachers throughout Christendom. Amidst tremendous enthusiasm, scarcely paralleled in history, multitudes took the Cross, encouraged to do so by the Pope's assurance that all penitents who fell fighting in the Holy Land would be sure of salvation. The first enthusiasts, indeed, would not wait for the Crusade to be properly organized. Three successive bands of Crusaders—little better than leaderless mobs—wended their way (1096) through France, Germany, and Hungary to Constantinople. The Emperor prudently shipped these undisciplined allies across to Asia, where most of them were slaughtered by the Turks.

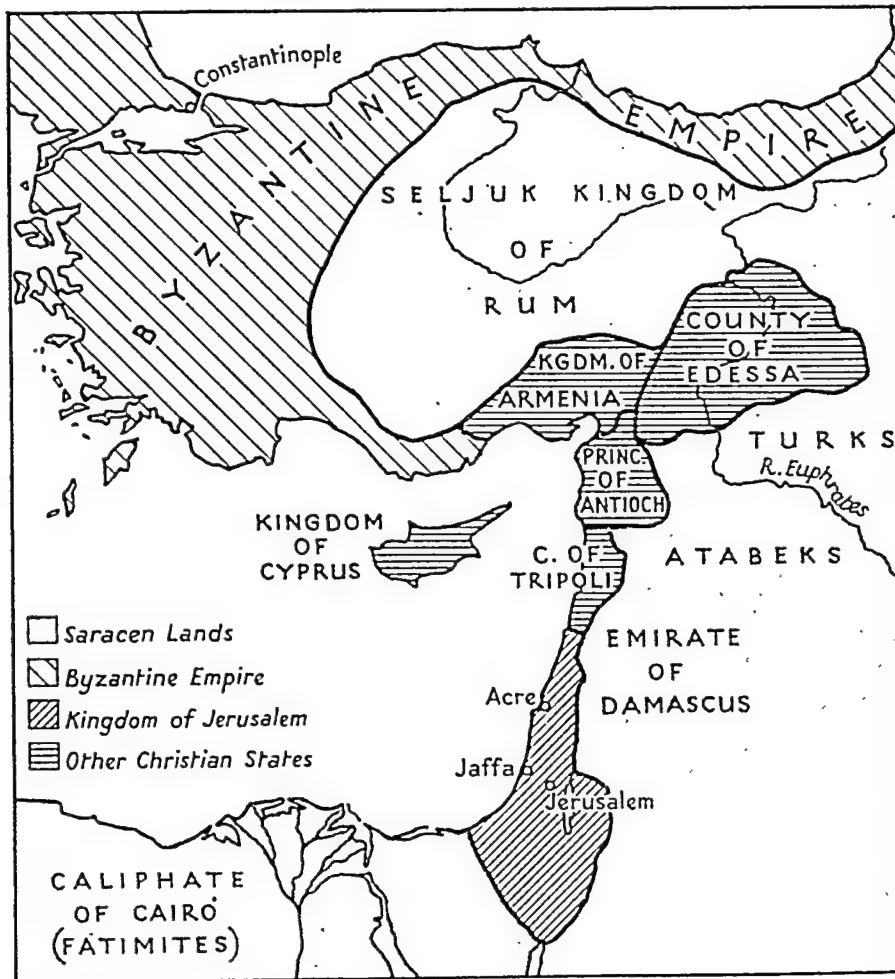
The First  
Crusade  
1096-9

The real Crusade began the next year (1097). Its leaders were drawn from the feudal nobility of western Europe; prominent among them were the knights of Normandy and Norman Sicily, including Robert, Duke of Normandy and brother of William Rufus. Leaving Constantinople, the Crusaders entered Asia Minor and took Antioch. Next year they stormed and captured Jerusalem (15 July 1099) amidst scenes of disgraceful brutality and massacre. The Christians turned from the work of slaughter to make a procession to the Holy Sepulchre. But next day their rage returned: 'Every one was eager for blood

Capture of  
Jerusalem  
1099

<sup>1</sup> Gibbon.

. . . some scaled the roof of the Temple itself and massacred both men and women with the sword . . . such a slaughter of pagan folk had never been seen or heard of; none knows their



ASIA MINOR AND SYRIA AFTER THE FIRST CRUSADE

The Crusaders' States in Palestine

number save God alone.' Well might the eyewitness confess that 'the Crusaders forsook God before God forsook them'. However that may be, the First Crusade proved the most successful of all the Crusades. Five Christian states, including the kingdom of Jerusalem, were set up in Syria. Godfrey de Bouillon was elected the first King of Jerusalem, but he, the gentlest of the Crusading knights, refused to wear a crown of gold in the city where his Saviour had worn a Crown of Thorns.

Another result of the First Crusade was the formation of certain new Orders of soldier-monks, whose character, half religious, half military, reflects the general spirit of the Crusades. The Knights Templars began (1118) with a Burgundian and eight other knights, who devoted themselves to the protection of the poor pilgrims to Jerusalem. These knights were given a house near Solomon's Temple, from which they took their name. Ten years later the Pope recognized the Templars as a definite religious Order. They rapidly increased in numbers. As a religious brotherhood, they took the three vows of chastity, poverty, and obedience; as soldiers, they soon became the main bulwarks of the Christian states in Palestine.

The Order of St. John of Jerusalem arose from a hospital which had existed, even before the First Crusade, for the poor and sick among the Christians at Jerusalem. When the Templars were formed into a religious Order, the master of St. John obtained permission to reorganize his own brotherhood on a military and religious basis; and so the Knights of St. John—or the Hospitallers—came into existence.

Both these Orders (like other monastic Orders) soon acquired great wealth in the form of lands, given them both in Palestine and in most western European countries.<sup>1</sup> In England the Templars settled in Holborn in Stephen's reign, but moved to the site of the present Temple, on the banks of the Thames (1184), where their church can still be seen.<sup>2</sup> The Templars, who grew in wealth and pride, but not in usefulness, were suppressed by order of the Pope (1312). And to-day their buildings in London are occupied by the lawyers of the 'Middle Temple' and the 'Inner Temple'.

<sup>1</sup> After the final failure of the Crusades in the thirteenth century, the main body of the Templars and the Knights of St. John retired to Cyprus. It was from there that the latter conquered the island of Rhodes, which they held for two centuries until expelled by the Turks (1522). After that they moved to Malta, which they held for nearly another three centuries, until the surrender of the island first to the French under Napoleon, and then to Nelson's fleet.

<sup>2</sup> King Stephen gave them Temple Cressing, in Essex; Queen Matilda (Stephen's wife, not his rival) gave them Temple Cowley, near Oxford, a place better known in modern times for the manufacture of motor-cars. There are other villages in England with similar associations, e.g. Temple Balsall (Warwickshire).

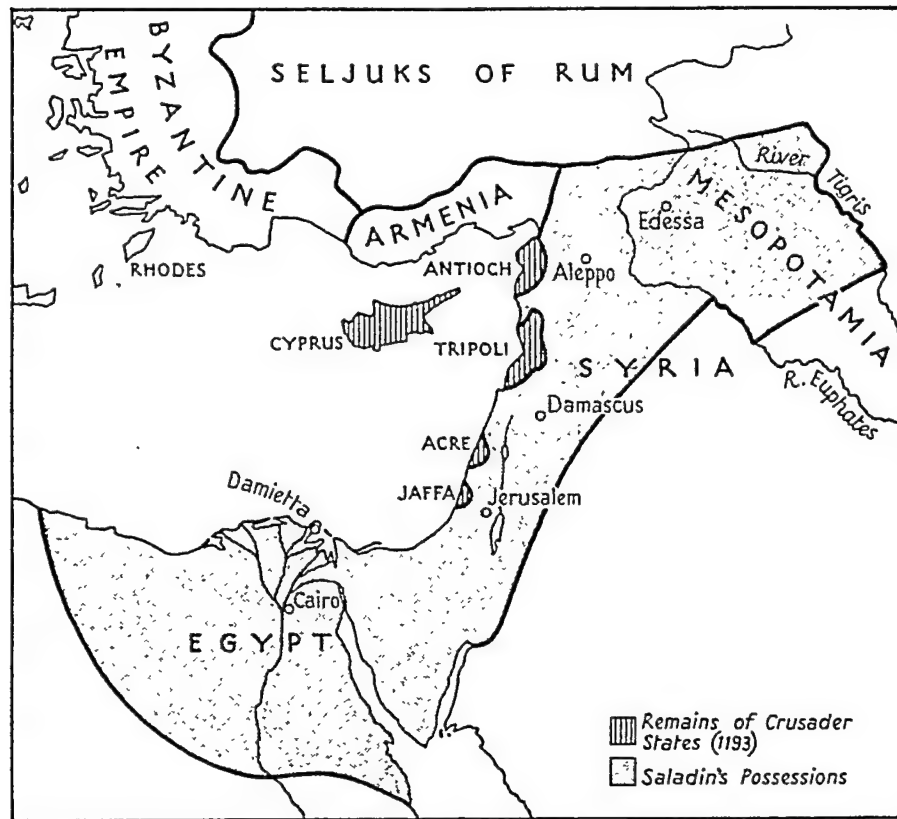
Knights  
Templars  
1118

Order of  
St. John of  
Jerusalem

The  
Templars  
in England

(ii) *The Third Crusade.*

The hero of the Third Crusade was Richard I of England. Before we can follow his exploits, we must trace the events which led to the revival of the Moslem<sup>1</sup> power, which in turn



SALADIN'S EMPIRE

caused the short and ill-fated Second Crusade, and the scarcely more successful Third Crusade.

Second  
Crusade  
1147

The formation of the Christian Kingdom of Jerusalem, the result of the First Crusade, had been made easier by the dismemberment of the Seljuk Empire. But there soon followed a Moslem revival under a succession of brilliant generals, one of whom took Edessa from the Christians. This news was the signal for the Second Crusade, prompted by the preaching of

<sup>1</sup> The Mohammedans called themselves Moslems, and their religion Islam (Submission); the Christians called them Saracens (Easterners).

St. Bernard (1147), which, however, was a series of disasters. The most brilliant of all the Moslem generals was Saladin, who (1171) became Sultan of Egypt, and then united Syria, Egypt, and Mesopotamia under his rule. Saladin was a great man, and a great ruler of men. Like the Crusaders he delighted in war against the 'infidel', but unlike most of them he enjoyed a well-deserved reputation for mercy in the moment of victory; he was the flower of Moslem chivalry. When he had united the Moslem states under him, he embarked on the great purpose of his life—his Holy War against the Christians.

In pursuit of this aim Saladin invaded the Kingdom of Jerusalem. The Christians, under their king, Guy de Lusignan, advanced to meet him, but Saladin destroyed their army at Hattin,<sup>1</sup> and took Jerusalem (1187). When the Moslem army entered the Holy City, soldiers kept order in the streets, a striking contrast to the disgraceful scenes of the First Crusade. The population was put to ransom, though many were spared by the mercy of Saladin.

Next year Saladin set free King Guy and his lords, on their giving their knightly word that they would never bear arms against him again. They broke their oath; and King Guy immediately joined the Christian army at Tyre, which city was all that was left of his kingdom. He then began the siege of Acre, which lasted for two years (1189-91). By this time the leaders of European chivalry were ready to embark on the Third Crusade.

The Fall of the Holy City! The news of this catastrophe had stirred all Christendom as it has seldom been stirred before or since; the clergy went into sackcloth, the laity into mourning. The Pope called upon all Christian princes to forgo their private quarrels and feudal wrangles, and take the Cross. The three greatest monarchs of Europe answered this call—the Emperor Frederick Barbarossa (Red-Beard), Philip Augustus of France, and Henry II of England. In England Henry imposed, for his proposed Crusade, the 'Saladin Tithe' (1188). But Henry and Philip were at war with each other until Henry

<sup>1</sup> The battle was fought on a hill called the Horns of Hattin—the very place, tradition said, where Jesus had preached the Sermon on the Mount . . . 'Blessed are the peacemakers'.

died (1189). His successor, Richard I, had already taken the Cross.

Philip and Richard Frederick Barbarossa, an old man of seventy, was the first to start, but he was drowned in a river in Syria. On his death Philip of France and Richard of England became the chief leaders of the Crusade. The two men were a striking contrast. Philip was a cool statesman; Richard a fiery man of action, and not always of wise action. Philip was naturally jealous of Richard's power, since the Angevin dominions engulfed half France; and the overbearing nature of Philip's mighty vassal did not help to smooth the path of friendship.

Character of Richard Richard was the kind of man whom Englishmen have always admired—a man of giant strength, great athletic skill, superb physical courage, and reckless generosity. But he shared with his brother John—whom he resembled in no other way—one failing: he never measured the consequences of his actions, and his actions were almost always impetuous. With the exception of George I,<sup>1</sup> England has never had a king who took so little interest in her welfare; and the presence of this fiery warrior in the councils of the Crusaders almost counteracted the effect of his achievements on the battlefield.

Richard in Sicily Philip and Richard left Marseilles together (1190), and sailed first to Sicily. There Richard soon showed his mettle in a quarrel with Tancred, the king of the island. Tancred had seized the lands of the widow of the last king, and she happened to be Richard's sister. Richard attacked the town of Messina and took it by storm, 'quicker than a priest could chant Matins'. Tancred returned the lady's lands; and the English forces left for Cyprus. Here again Richard quarrelled with the native king. This time he took not merely one town; he conquered the whole island and deposed the king. At Cyprus, too, he celebrated his marriage to a Spanish princess, Berengaria

<sup>1</sup> The reason in both cases was much the same. Both Richard I and George I were foreigners, whose interests lay elsewhere than in England. The Holy Land, which attracted Richard, was no doubt a more inspiring place than Hanover, beloved of the unromantic George. But both the heroic Angevin and the gross German king left England to their ministers; and Hubert Walter ruled England for Richard, as Walpole ruled it for George.



of Navarre. Before doing so, he repudiated, in most insulting terms, his engagement to Alice, the French king's sister, an action which did not improve his relations with Philip. After this he left for the Holy Land, whither Philip had already departed.

When King Richard landed in Palestine (June 1191), the Crusaders lit fires in their camps 'for joy at his coming, . . . and the hearts of the Mussulmans were filled with fear'. The siege of Acre had already lasted two years, and the coming of Richard and Philip with their reinforcements turned the scale. A month after Richard's arrival Acre fell (1191), and the banner of the Cross once more floated over its walls. Even in the moment of victory, the Crusaders quarrelled. The banner of Leopold, Duke of Austria, which had been planted by the side of King Richard's, was torn down and thrown into a ditch by an English knight, probably by the king's command. Leopold dared not retaliate; but he left Palestine in disgust, nursing his revenge. Shortly afterwards Philip quarrelled with Richard and returned to France.

Richard now began an offensive against Saladin. He pushed southward along the coast, won the battle of Arsuf—where he performed prodigies of valour—and took Jaffa (see map). He then turned eastward, intending to take Jerusalem, but the Syrian leaders were averse from an attack on the city in the winter. Sadly he turned back, and led his army to Ascalon (January 1192), which he found abandoned and dismantled by the Moslems. The following summer Richard marched once more on Jerusalem. But sickness in his army and lack of French co-operation wrecked his plans, and he was forced to turn back within sight of the Holy City. He returned to Acre.

Peace was made with Saladin at Ramleh (1192); Richard, on behalf of the Crusaders, recognized all Saladin's conquests, in return for which the Sultan allowed the Christians to keep Jaffa and to have free access to the Holy Sepulchre. So ended, in practical failure, the great effort of the Third Crusade. The next year Saladin died, triumphant over his enemies, and mourned by his people.

In spite of the peace of Ramleh, Richard warned Saladin that he hoped one day to return. When he sailed away he

looked back with pious eyes on the land behind him, and then broke into prayer: 'O Holy Land! To God do I entrust thee! May He, of His mercy, only grant me such span of life that, by His good will, I may bring thee aid! For it is my hope and purpose to aid thee at some future time.' His prayer was not granted. Other adventures befell him, but not in Palestine.

Richard leaves Palestine On the way home he was captured in Austria, and imprisoned by the Duke whom he had offended at Acre. After his release his warlike nature soon led him into war in France, where he met his death.

After the failure of the Third Crusade several further efforts were made against the Moslems, both in Egypt and Palestine, but none were successful. Regarded as an effort to free the Holy Land from the Moslems, the Crusades were obviously a failure. But though they did not promote the fraternal unity of Christendom, nevertheless they were a remarkable example of international organization; and if they failed in their main object, they had other enduring results.

Results of the Crusades First, those two hundred years of travel and intercourse between Europe and Asia stimulated trade with the East. The towns which the Christians so long held in Palestine (Acre, Antioch, Tripoli) were means of communication between the East and the ports of Italy. The rise of Venice as the chief trading city of Europe may partly be traced to this cause, for the Crusades started her on her career of commercial monopoly in the Mediterranean. Through the fleets of Venice unheard-of luxuries both of food and clothing—velvet, muslin (from Mosul), and damask (from Damascus)—found their way into western homes, and orange trees and rose trees into western gardens. In this way the arts and crafts of the East—above all, the making of paper—penetrated into Europe.

Secondly, through this contact with the cultured East, the spirit of curiosity in unknown lands was aroused. Europe became less self-contained, but also less barbarous and isolated. The travels of the Venetian, Marco Polo—contemporary with Edward I—were one outcome of this spirit which, culminating in the great explorations of Columbus and others, revealed the whole world to European eyes. The Crusades had lifted the veil.

## VII

### JOHN AND HENRY III

#### I. *King John and the Pope*

THE character of King John has furnished many a moralist with an example of the fate of the evil-doer. He was the 'bad king', the 'false friend', and the 'wicked uncle' all combined; and his life ended in humiliation and disaster. The favourite son of Henry II, John had shown, long before he came to the throne, that he was faithless and untrustworthy. His ingratitude to his indulgent father shortened that monarch's life, while his treachery to his brother Richard was an ill omen for his own reign. John was unlucky in his antagonists. He quarrelled with the greatest Pope of the Middle Ages, Innocent III, and with the ablest monarch of his day, Philip Augustus, who was intent on uniting the provinces of France under a strong monarchy. Finally he lost his life in a struggle with his own people, which was in part provoked by his own crimes, and which called out all that was best and ablest in the nation against him. Yet some good and able men, like William the Marshal, were on his side. John was a clever man, but not a wise one. Cruel and pitiless in the execution of his immediate will, he lacked any conception of a far-seeing policy; nor was he ever capable of seeing whither his own wild courses were leading him. They eventually led him to his submission at the feet of the Pope's legate and to the sealing of the Great Charter at Runnymede.

John, 1199-1216

His character

John began his reign by a quarrel with his young nephew Arthur, son of his elder brother Geoffrey of Brittany. Arthur was already Duke of Brittany; he also claimed Anjou, Maine, and Touraine by right of inheritance and did homage for these to King Philip of France. John, meanwhile, had offended a powerful nobleman in Aquitaine, the Count de la Marche, by carrying off his affianced bride and marrying her himself. (He had just divorced his first wife, Avice of Gloucester, thus offending the influential Gloucester family in England.) Philip

Arthur of Brittany

took up the cause both of Arthur and of the Count de la Marche, and, with Arthur's help, invaded Normandy.

John had thus already raised up against himself a host of enemies. One of the least fortunate of these, Prince Arthur of Brittany, fell into his hands at the castle of Mirabeau (1203); and John, with characteristic devilishness, caused him to be murdered. Murder of Arthur 1203 Apart from this success, the war went against him. Philip rapidly conquered Normandy, Anjou, and Touraine. When (1204) King Richard's 'Saucy Castle' (Château Gaillard) on the Seine surrendered to the French king and Rouen capitulated, there was nothing of the Duchy of Normandy left to John—except the Channel Isles which have remained British to this day. John then returned to England after an absence of two years. In the south-west of France Poitou submitted to Philip; while Gascony, the main remnant of the large dowry which had been brought to Henry II by his wife, remained faithful to John. That was all that was left of the Angevin Empire. The loss, though humiliating at the time, was not really unfortunate. Now that the connexion (1066–1204) with Normandy was finally broken, the distinction in England between Norman baron and Saxon subject became somewhat less marked. Henceforth the Norman knights found their main interests in their adopted country, while Normandy, the home of their ancestors, gradually became to them a foreign land. Loss of Normandy 1204

John, having lost the Norman-Angevin lands, next quarrelled with the Pope, Innocent III. Archbishop Hubert Walter having died (1205), the monks of Canterbury, without consulting either the bishops or the king, elected their sub-prior Reginald to the vacant see; they then sent Reginald to Rome for the Pope's confirmation. As soon as this news leaked out, the bishops protested, and appealed to Innocent against the election. While the Pope was engaged in hearing this appeal, The Canterbury Election 1205 John ordered the bishops and the resident monks at Canterbury to elect as archbishop his own nominee, John de Gray, Bishop of Norwich, and then sent to Rome to request Innocent to recognize the election. Naturally the Pope refused to accept a nomination made in this arbitrary manner. He listened, however, to the appeals of the monks and the bishops; then disallowed the elections of both Reginald and John de Gray, and

instead appointed Cardinal Stephen Langton, an Englishman of high repute then resident at the Papal Court. When he heard this news John burst into one of his violent fits of rage. He confiscated the estates of the monks of Canterbury and he refused to allow Cardinal Langton to set foot in England. But Innocent was not the man to go back on a course on which he had once embarked. When John proved obdurate, he laid the whole of England under an Interdict (1208), which shut the churches, suspended the Mass, and stopped the bells; baptisms and marriages were performed in the church porch, and even the dead were buried silently in unconsecrated ground. Indeed the life of the people seemed to stand still, for around the parish church—and the manor court—all village life in those days revolved.

The Interdict, 1208

In the following year (1209), John was excommunicated, that is, excluded from the sacraments and services of the Church. But the heedless king, confident in his strength and insolent in his defiance, lashed out at his enemies. Confiscation of their lands cowed many of the clergy, while the more courageous, who refused to serve the excommunicate king, were taken prisoner, tortured, and put to death. At the same time John hurled defiance at the barons, and at the slightest excuse he seized their castles, drove the owners into exile, and held their wives and children to ransom in the royal dungeons. John's quarrel with the barons arose from political causes (e.g. scutage<sup>1</sup> and foreign service), not from the ecclesiastical dispute, with which the barons were not at first concerned.

John excommunicated, 1209

John's defiance

The Pope, however, had one more card to play: he pronounced John deposed, and absolved the English people from their allegiance to him (1212). Philip of France eagerly accepted Innocent's command to depose John, and prepared to make war on him. John in reply made an alliance with the Emperor Otto IV against Philip who was their common enemy. For a time the lawless king maintained his defiance. He concentrated the English fyrd at Dover, and he even sent a fleet across the Channel to burn Dieppe. But a rebellion of the Welsh princes encouraged by French agents, the alliance of some of the barons with the King of Scots, and the obvious disaffection of his own

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 128.

His sur-  
render to  
the Legate  
1213

people, showed John that the game was up. With characteristic cunning and energy he suddenly reversed his tactics. He received Archbishop Langton. He promised to do homage later to the Pope when he found an opportunity of going to Rome. To Pandulf, the Papal Legate, he surrendered his crown (1213), and, before receiving it again, acknowledged that England was a fief of the Holy See, and that as the Pope's vassal he would pay an annual tribute to Rome—and indeed for some few years afterwards the Pope practically ruled England through his Legates. By this stroke John turned the tables on his adversaries for the time being. Those barons who were intriguing with the King of Scotland or the King of France could no longer claim that they were rightfully warring against an ex-communicate king. On the contrary they were obviously traitors, waging war against their lawful sovereign, the acknowledged vassal, and now the ally, of the Head of Christendom.

Philip's  
prepara-  
tions

Bouvines  
1214

The Pope, in return for John's submission, ordered the French king to desist from his warlike preparations. But Philip had no intention of turning back now. He had allied himself with the brilliant young Frederick, King of Sicily, who had just come to Germany to claim the Imperial crown, the heritage of his house. John, on the other hand, was in league with the reigning Emperor, Otto, and sent an army under the Earl of Salisbury to Flanders. He himself went to Poitou, hoping to keep the French armies engaged there, while his ally attacked France from the east. But matters fell out otherwise. Salisbury joined forces with the Emperor Otto in Flanders, but, when the allied armies met the French at the battle of Bouvines (1214), they were heavily defeated, and Salisbury himself was taken prisoner. As a result of this action Otto lost the Imperial crown to Frederick II, and John lost all hope of recovering his former possessions in France. With difficulty he escaped from Poitou, and returned to England.

English  
opposition  
to John

In England he found the clergy, the barons, and the townspeople united against him. His losses in France had placed him in a momentarily weak position, of which his English enemies were not slow to take advantage. They found a leader in Stephen Langton, who produced the Charter granted by King Henry I, and read it privately to the assembled barons

in St. Paul's Cathedral. This meant that Langton and the barons were determined to extract from England's worst king a promise to govern according to the recognized feudal customs of the realm. The result of their determination was the sealing of Magna Carta.

## 2. *Magna Carta*

At Easter, 1215, the barons met in arms at Brackley, and the king now realized that the townspeople, too, resented his misrule. London opened its gates to the baronial army under Robert Fitz Walter, who called himself 'Marshal of the Army of God and Holy Church'. John saw that resistance was useless: he agreed to meet the barons 'in the meadow which is called Runnymede, between Windsor and Staines', where Langton presented him with the document known as the Great Charter (15 June 1215).<sup>1</sup>

Magna  
Carta, 15  
June 1215

The principle which underlies the Great Charter is that the king has no right to violate the law. And the law, as the barons understood it, was feudal custom regulating the relations between the king and his vassals. The Great Charter stated, in conservative terms, what were the customs of the land; it was also a treaty between the barons and the king, and it contained a clause to secure its execution.

To understand Magna Carta is to understand the Feudal Age. The first of its sixty-three clauses guaranteed that 'the English Church shall be free', i.e. enjoy her ancient liberties and be free from royal (though not papal) encroachments. A few clauses protected incidentally the villein, for it was to the lord's interest to protect his 'property' against the king. Many clauses dealt with the conditions under which the barons held

<sup>1</sup> 'JOHANNES, Dei gratia rex Angliae, dominus Hyberniae, dux Normanniae et Aquitanniae, comes Andegaviae, archiepiscopis, episcopis, abbatibus, comitibus, baronibus, justiciariis, forestariis, vicecomitibus, praepositis, ministris, et omnibus ballivis et fidelibus suis, salutem.'

'John, by the grace of God, king of England, lord of Ireland, duke of Normandy and Aquitaine, count of Anjou, to the archbishops, bishops, abbots, earls, barons, justiciars, foresters, sheriffs, reeves, servants, and all bailiffs and his faithful people, greeting.' (The ordinary formula used by the king's chancery at the beginning of every Charter.)

The Liberties of the Barons

their land, and guaranteed to them the feudal 'liberties' which the Angevin kings had threatened. The *libertates* of the Charter did not mean 'liberty' in the modern sense, but the feudal 'liberties' or 'privileges' of the barons, such as the management of their own lands without interference from the king's judges and sheriffs. The ideal of the barons was feudal custom, as their fathers had known it, and not that efficient despotism of Henry II—abused by Richard and John for their own ends—which tended to supersede feudal custom and to equalize men in the eyes of the law.

It had been John's habit to resort to all kinds of unauthorized taxation to fill his treasury. The Charter bound him not to impose on his barons any 'scutage or aid except with the consent of the Common Council of our realm'; and to this Council were to be summoned the greater barons individually, and all tenants-in-chief through the sheriffs, as was the custom. Again, it had been John's practice to seize the lands of widows and heirs and only to restore the inheritance after the payment of an enormous fine: the Charter upheld the right of heirs to succeed freely to their inheritance, while a widow was promised that 'she shall have her marriage portion immediately and without obstruction' after the death of her husband. As for John's arbitrary seizure of baronial castles, 'if any one shall have been dispossessed or removed by us without legal judgement of his peers, from his land, castles . . . or his right, we will restore them to him immediately'.

Magna Carta has been hailed as the charter which guarantees the liberty of Englishmen. But there is nothing in it to suggest this later interpretation, which rests chiefly upon Clause 40—  
 Clause 39 'To none will we sell, to none will we delay or deny right and justice'—and upon Clause 39, also dealing with justice—'No freeman shall be taken or imprisoned or dispossessed or outlawed or banished or in any way destroyed . . . except by the legal judgement of his peers or by the law of the land.' This famous Clause 39 has nothing to do with trial by jury which (as we now mean it) came long after 1215; and by his 'peers' the baron meant his equals in rank rather than the upstart servants of the king. The 'freeman' who is guaranteed against oppression is the *liber homo* of feudal times, the 'free' holder



of land—not the ‘free man’ of our days, nor the villein of those days who remained tied to the lord and his land. The notion that all Englishmen are born free would scarcely have been intelligible to the authors of the Charter: they would as soon have thought of granting freedom to their horses and cattle as to their serfs or villeins, who then formed three-quarters of the population.<sup>1</sup>

The one revolutionary clause in Magna Carta was Clause 61 which attempted to bind the king, by something more than a promise, to observe the terms of the Charter. A special body of twenty-five barons was to be elected, ‘who ought with all their power to observe, hold, and cause to be observed, the peace and liberties which we have conceded to them’. When John heard this clause he exclaimed: ‘They have given me five and twenty over-kings!’

To sum up, Magna Carta was mainly the charter of the barons: the great mass of the people, the villeins, had little interest in it. It contained nothing revolutionary, except the provision to create a controlling council of twenty-five barons. It did not guarantee ‘liberty’ to all Englishmen, because such an idea was unheard of in 1215. But in later ages, especially in the struggle against the Stuart kings—by which time every Englishman was a ‘free man’—some of the clauses of the Charter were given a newer and wider meaning and invoked against the Crown. Magna Carta is vitally important in our history because it was the first attempt upon the part of the English people to bind their king to adhere, as his subjects were expected to do, to the rule of Law and the customs of the land. As such, it was not only a valuable precedent for later times, but it is also a landmark in the history of that liberty which has for long been and still is the main heritage of England.

The  
Charter in  
later history

John had no intention of keeping to the provisions of the Charter. Force had extracted from him the promises it contained, and force, he intended, should render the promises valueless at the earliest possible moment. His main hope lay

<sup>1</sup> Compare Richard II's attitude after the Peasants' Revolt (1381): ‘Villeins ye are, and villeins ye shall remain.’ See Chapter XI, Sect. 3 (ii).

in Rome; Innocent was now his ally and was prepared to support him. The Pope annulled the Great Charter as having been drawn up by rebels against their lawful sovereign, and called upon the barons to submit to the king's will; they prepared, however, for civil war. It was thus with a great show of right on his side that John awaited at Dover the army of mercenaries who, crusaders with the Pope's blessing, were crossing the Channel to come to his aid. When this army arrived John advanced northwards, and ravaged the country as far as Berwick. Then he turned south and marched on London, the head-quarters of his enemies.

The barons, meanwhile, had invited King Philip of France to invade England, and in reply the latter sent his son, the Dauphin Louis, with an army to join the rebel barons in London. John held the castles of the Thames—Windsor, Wallingford, Oxford—and had some hope of starving London into surrender. But his French mercenaries would not fight against the Dauphin, and began to desert. John fell back on the Welsh border. Then he made one final effort: he dashed across England and secured Lincoln. The issue was still uncertain. It looked as if the country would be plunged into ruinous civil war, when disaster finally overtook the king. He crossed the marshes of the Wash, and lost all his baggage in the quicksands, 'and now the heart that was obdurate against the sufferings of the people, that had been unmoved by the cries of the tortured . . . is broken by the loss of his treasure'.<sup>1</sup> The king fell ill of a fever, and entered Newark only to die (1216).

His life was selfish, vain, and shifting; his death saved England from civil war, while the failure of his tyranny conferred benefits on his country of which he, who had so little grasp of principle, was not even aware.

### 3. *Henry III—Early Years*

Henry III was only nine years old when his father, King John, died. His kingdom was on the verge of dismemberment. The French invasion of England was proceeding; the Dauphin was in London claiming the crown, and some of the barons

<sup>1</sup> Stubbs.

were fighting for him. England was saved from this perilous situation by the efforts of William Marshall, Earl of Pembroke, and of Hubert de Burgh, the Justiciar. Now that John was dead, most of the baronial party rallied to Pembroke who defeated the French at Lincoln (1217). Hubert de Burgh and the men of the Cinque Ports scattered a French fleet off Sandwich in the Straits of Dover and shortly afterwards the Dauphin agreed to leave England.

Pembroke died two years later, and then for nearly a decade England was ruled by Hubert de Burgh. He re-issued the Great Charter in the king's name, and governed the country well during Henry's minority. But the quiet years before the king came of age (1227) were a deceptive prelude to a long and unquiet reign. He gave his confidence to his Poitevin tutor, Peter des Roches, who was made Bishop of Winchester. Under the bishop's influence, Henry dismissed his great Justiciar, and Hubert de Burgh was arrested and cast into prison (1232). It is said that the smith who was ordered to place chains on the fallen minister refused to do so: 'Is not he that most faithful Hubert who so often saved England from the devastation of the foreigners, and restored England to England?' Henry III now felt a free man, and prepared to govern England himself (1234-72).

Henry III was unsuited by temperament to be the ruler of a turbulent country. He was a man of culture and refinement, and his artistic tastes were shown in his love of fine workmanship and fine architecture. Westminster Abbey, as we see it to-day, is largely his work, for he pulled down Edward the Confessor's Abbey in order to build in memory of that saintly king a larger and more magnificent shrine. But with all his culture and all his piety—for he was a devoted son of the Church—he was neither a strong man nor a successful king. Wilful and headstrong, he resented any interference with his wishes, yet he lacked the capacity to govern. He had little sense of finance, and he was a poor judge of men—two weaknesses which boded ill for his kingdom.

The resemblance between the first and the second builders of Westminster Abbey—Edward the Confessor and Henry III—is very marked. Both were pious men, both were set apart

Hubert de  
Burgh

His fall  
1232

Character  
of Henry III

from the common run of mankind by something fine and sensitive in their natures, both failed to impose their will on their rougher contemporaries. Above all, Henry III resembled the Confessor in his chief weakness—his preference for foreigners over Englishmen. The Poitevin followers of Peter des Roches accordingly crowded to his court: and, with his marriage to Eleanor of Provence (1236), came an invasion of Provençals and Savoyards. Queen Eleanor, whose sister had married St. Louis of France, also brought to England her Italian uncles, princes of the House of Savoy. These uncles thrived on Henry's favour: Boniface of Savoy became Archbishop of Canterbury; William, Bishop of Winchester; Peter (whose name still lives in the Savoy in the Strand, where his palace once stood) became Earl of Richmond; while Thomas, another of the brethren, married a rich heiress through Henry's influence.

Apart from the favours and the riches which the king showered on his wife's relations and their followers, there was another grievance. The Pope, Gregory IX, was engaged in a struggle with the Emperor Frederick II; his legate, Otto, was ordered (1237) to raise money in England to provide the necessary funds for the war. Otto demanded a fifth of all clerical goods for the 'crusade' against the heretic Emperor. But the Pope went farther. He 'provided' three hundred Roman clergy with benefices in England, so that he might obtain the support of their families against Frederick. Few of those thus favoured ever visited the country from which they drew their incomes. Henry's attitude to all this may be gauged from his remark: 'I neither wish nor dare to oppose the Lord Pope in anything.' In fact he seemed content to have England administered as a province of the papal states and to 'be plundered without shame'.

#### 4. *Simon de Montfort*

On the death of Frederick II (1250), Pope Alexander IV offered the crown of Sicily, which Frederick II had held, to Henry's son, Edmund, for a considerable price; he also arranged—again at a price—for Henry's brother, Richard, Earl of Cornwall, to be crowned King of the Romans (that is, Emperor-elect). Neither of these high-sounding dignities was

of any value; Edmund never set foot in Sicily, and Richard, though he was crowned at Aachen, was never acknowledged in Germany.

Henry, meanwhile, was obliged to fight a campaign, which was wholly unsuccessful, against Llewelyn ap Gruffydd, who had assumed the title of Prince of Wales.<sup>1</sup> He returned from this enterprise to find the opposition hardening against him—an opposition which had found leaders. The clergy were resentful against the papal exactions and against aliens in the Church, and for these they blamed the king; they were led (till his death in 1253) by Grosseteste, the bold and scholarly Bishop of Lincoln. The barons and the knights also resented the king's extravagant enterprises and were ready to demand reforms. Their leader was Simon de Montfort, a French noble who was Earl of Leicester, and a friend, for a time, of Prince Edward. De Montfort was a man of considerable personality who at first had been just one of the king's foreign favourites. Henry had given him his own sister in marriage, and had made him governor of Gascony, which he saved for the English Crown. Then there was a quarrel, and de Montfort was dismissed from his Gascon appointment (1253). He had, thereupon, joined the ranks of the king's enemies.

The Council of Oxford<sup>2</sup> (1258), at which the barons appeared in arms, was the turning-point of Henry's reign. They at once demanded a redress of grievances from the king, including the immediate expulsion of the foreign favourites from the realm. They then set up a commission of twenty-four barons to put the kingdom in order. The commission drew up what was practically a new form of government (Provisions of Oxford, 1258). Fifteen barons, led by Simon de Montfort and Richard de Clare, Earl of Gloucester, were to form a permanent council to control the whole action of the king's government—a legalized form of baronial oligarchy. Henry swore to abide by

<sup>1</sup> See below, pp. 171-2.

<sup>2</sup> Sometimes wrongly called the 'Mad Parliament', though it was a baronial rather than a national Council. 'Mad' originated in a misreading of a manuscript of one of the chronicles, which spoke (so it was supposed) of '*insane* parliamentum'; actually what the chronicle said was '*insigne* parliamentum'.

the Provisions, but the next year he obtained an absolution from his oath from the Pope, Alexander IV. Both barons and king then agreed to submit the dispute to the arbitration of St. Louis of France. The French king decided (Mise of Amiens, 1264) in favour of Henry, and declared the Provisions of Oxford not binding. The result of this award was civil war in England, with de Montfort at the head of the rebel army.

Simon de Montfort defeated the king in a single campaign. The royal army lay at Lewes in Sussex, and at dawn on 14 May 1264 the troops of Earl Simon appeared on the hill outside the town. Prince Edward, the king's heir, and now Simon's most formidable antagonist, saw the earl's banner planted on the hill-side. He led his troops forward to take it, and found the banner guarded by a body of Londoners. The earl himself was not there. By this stratagem Simon enticed the prince out of the way; while Edward was pursuing the Londoners the earl advanced on Lewes. He routed the royal army, and captured three kings—the King of England, the 'King' of Sicily, and the 'King of the Romans'. When Edward returned he was obliged to surrender and was made a prisoner.

After this, Earl Simon ruled England for a year. His character is a puzzle to historians; to some he is a mere party leader, to others a statesman. His masterful temper could ill brook the interference of others. He forgot that he was but one among many barons—that he could not rule England like a dictator but needed the willing co-operation of his fellow barons. That he did not obtain it is evident from the fact that he summoned only twenty-three barons to his famous Parliament of 1265. But he made a bid for the support of the towns by summoning to this Parliament, along with the knights of the shires, two burgesses from every town which favoured his cause. For this action Simon has been called the founder of England's Parliament; but probably his chief concern was to gain a momentary advantage over the king's party by winning the support of the 'gentry' and burgesses outside the baronage.

The country was far from quiet during Simon's rule, for half the barons were in arms against him. 'When any one wished to defend his castle, he [Simon] laid waste everything

belonging to his neighbours, devastated fields and drove away cattle, for the defence of his castle; nor did the churches or cemeteries escape. The homes of the poor peasants, even to the straw of their beds, were torn up and taken '—which sounds ominously like one of Stephen's barons!

The next spring, a year after Lewes, Prince Edward escaped from his captors by outwitting them in a horse race. Edward and the Earl of Gloucester, the most influential baron of the March, now claimed to be true champions of good government—for Edward was wise enough to learn from Simon's tactics. The earl was as much a foreigner as Henry's former favourites, as his enemies pointed out. He had also lost much popularity by making an ally of Llewelyn, having forced his captive, King Henry, to make a treaty acknowledging Llewelyn as Prince of Wales, a title which the Welshman demanded as the price of his alliance (Treaty of Pipton, 1265). But Edward and Gloucester now had most of the Border country behind them. Simon sent for his son to raise troops in the south-eastern counties and London, and to pick up more men in the midlands *en route* for Kenilworth.

Young Simon's army, however, was scattered at Kenilworth by Edward's forces; the survivors took refuge in the Castle, which belonged to the earl. A few days later (4 August) Edward entrapped de Montfort's army in a curve of the river Avon at Evesham. Placing his best men across the isthmus of land, and sending another force to guard the bridge over the river, Edward had Simon at his mercy. The earl knew that the end had come; there was nothing left but to die fighting. In a few hours all was over.

Earl Simon's popularity with his countrymen did not diminish with his death. Rather was he, like Becket, regarded by the people as a martyr who had died for the cause of freedom, as the following refrain of a contemporary song shows:

Now low there lies, the flower of price,  
That knew so much of war,  
The Earl Montfort, whose luckless sort,  
The land shall long deplore.

He was the friend too of the Friars and of the learned Grosse-teste, Bishop of Lincoln, the fearless critic of papal abuses.

Escape of  
Prince  
Edward

Evesham  
1265

After this Prince Edward was master of the situation. His father retired from the active business of ruling, and the barons were content when they saw that the government would be in the capable hands of the prince. He promised to rule according to the Charter, and no more was heard of the controlling council of barons. Quiet succeeded storm, and Edward was able to leave England and go on a Crusade. While he was in the Holy Land his father died, after a reign of fifty-seven years (1272).

Death of  
Henry III  
1272



MEDIEVAL WARFARE. SOLDIERS PILLAGING A HOUSE



## DATE SUMMARY: THE ANGEVINS

(1154-1272)

### ENGLAND AND FRANCE

### EUROPE AND THE EAST

#### HENRY II (1154-89)

1152-91 Emp. Frederick Barbarossa

- 1154 Henry of Anjou, King  
Becket Chancellor
- 1162 Becket Archbishop
- 1164 Constitution of Clarendon
- 1166 Assize of Clarendon
- 1164-70 Becket in exile
- 1170 MURDER OF BECKET  
Strongbow in Ireland

1171 SALADIN Sultan of Egypt

- 1173-4 First Rebellion of Henry's sons
- 1188 Second Rebellion of Henry's sons  
Saladin Tithe

1187 Saladin takes Jerusalem

#### RICHARD I (1189-99)

- 1189-91 Third Crusade
- 1192 Treaty of Ramleh
- 1193 Captivity of Richard

1194 Llewelyn the Great, Prince of Wales

#### JOHN (1199-1216)

1198-1216 Innocent III Pope

- 1203 Murder of Arthur
- 1204 Loss of Normandy
- 1205 Canterbury Election
- 1209 John excommunicated
- 1213 John submits to the Pope
- 1214 ✕ Bouvines
- 1215 MAGNA CARTA

1216 Dominican Order

#### HENRY III (1216-72)

- 1215-50 Emperor Frederick II
- 1225 Birth of St. Thomas Aquinas
- 1226 St. Francis *d.*
- 1226-70 Louis IX of France (St. Louis)

- 1232 Fall of Hubert de Burgh
- 1236 Henry *m.* Eleanor of Provence
- 1240 Llewelyn the Great *d.*
- 1254 Llewelyn II, Prince of Wales
- 1258 Council of Oxford
- 1264 ✕ Lewes
- 1265 Simon de Montfort's Parliament  
✕ Evesham
- 1272 Henry III *d.*

1265 Birth of Dante

## VIII

### EDWARD I AND EDWARD II

#### 1. *The Laws of Edward I*

Edward I  
1272-1307 ALTHOUGH de Montfort's rebellion had been crushed and the earl himself killed, the Barons' War had not been fought in vain. For the victor, Edward I, was one of those men who do not repeat mistakes. He had had experience as ruler of wide lands in Gascony, in Wales, in Ireland, as well as in England. In appearance Edward was a striking figure.

'He was tall and well-built, so that, walking with other people, he stood out head and shoulders above them. . . . His head was round, the abiding-place of great wisdom and the special sanctuary of high counsel. His full round eyes were frank and dove-like when he was in happy mood, but in anger and when his lion heart was moved, they flashed fire and lighted up fiercely . . . He was long-shanked, like a horseman, and had a full throat and strong shoulders. . . . Ever straight as a palm, he always maintained the nimbleness of youth in riding; and by keeping under grossness of physique by continual hard work, he was hardly ever ill. No one had a keener wit in counsel, a greater fluency in speaking, coolness in danger, restraint in success, constancy in failure.'

His aims Edward I, having lived through one civil war, did not intend to cause another. His government was no mere return either to the tyranny of foreigners as under Henry III or to the cruel despotism of John. Rather he saw that the king must make all classes of the country—barons, knights, townsfolk, clergy—willing co-operators in the business of government. His high standard of efficiency caused him to make frequent personal visits to all parts of the kingdom and of his duchy of Gascony. In England he showed a constant concern for the welfare of his subjects, especially of the lesser barons or knights and of the citizens of the towns he favoured or founded. He relied more and more, as Henry II had done, not on the greater barons, but on a small group of professional ministers and lawyers.

The most popular deed of Edward's reign was the expulsion of the Jews. Since the Conquest the Jews in England had been steadily increasing in numbers and influence. The source of their vast wealth was their keen business instinct and the practice of usury, or the lending of money at interest, which was, however, condemned by the Church<sup>1</sup> as a deadly sin. The medieval attitude towards usury is one of many indications of the wide gap between medieval and modern thought; for usury is one of the main planks on which the structure of modern capitalist society rests. But though Christians might not lend money at interest, they took advantage of the willingness of the Jews to lend to them. The English kings, especially Henry III, borrowed large sums from Jewish financiers. The people at large hated Jews with all the unreasoning hatred of the ignorant.<sup>2</sup> The most fantastic stories were believed about them. And periodically there were popular outbreaks against these unfortunate people, in which they suffered every kind of outrage, and in which many of them lost their lives. Edward I shared his subjects' disapproval of the Jews, and at the beginning of his reign he passed a law making usury illegal. Deprived of their means of livelihood, the Jews struggled on for a time, but at length Edward expelled<sup>3</sup> them from the kingdom (1290). He had discovered useful substitutes in the Italian merchant-bankers, who were less obnoxious to the religious and racial prejudices of the age.

The legal enactments<sup>4</sup> of Edward I's reign have earned him the title of the English Justinian.<sup>5</sup> The Parliament of 1275, the first of his reign, was called upon to pass (in the First Statute of Westminster) the 'Great and Ancient Custom' as it was afterwards called, by which the king was provided with a regular income from a tax on the export of wool and leather. This remained a permanent source of revenue for the Crown.

First  
Statute of  
Westmin-  
ster, 1275

<sup>1</sup> Based on St. Luke vi. 35, and other Scriptural passages.

<sup>2</sup> See Scott, *Ivanhoe*, chapter v.

<sup>3</sup> Jews were not re-admitted into England till Cromwell's time.

<sup>4</sup> Edward I's legislation (an account of which is here printed in small type) is mainly important from the strictly legal point of view.

<sup>5</sup> The Emperor Justinian (527-65), who partly restored the Roman Empire to its former glory, is chiefly remembered for his codification of the Roman law, which still forms the basis of modern law in most European countries. All legal students still study the 'Code of Justinian'.

Within a few months of his return to England from his Crusade (1274), Edward ordered an inquiry into the general condition of the counties. He sent out officials to ask of the juries in every county how many manors the king himself held and to find out at the same time what baronial 'liberties' existed which might hinder common justice and subvert the royal power. This inquiry was carried out hundred by hundred, and the juries' answers were set down in bulky documents known as the Hundred Rolls, which are a mine of information as to the conditions of the time. When the great inquiry was finished, Edward issued the Statute of Gloucester (1278), which aimed at making the system of law more uniform throughout the realm. It directed the justices, when next they made their *itex* or tour, to inquire by what right (*quo warranto*) the barons held their courts and exercised their privileges. By this Statute Edward I hoped to deprive the lords of all feudal rights for which they could not produce a royal charter. 'Here is my warrant,' said Earl Warenne, unsheathing a rusty sword as his title-deed; 'my ancestors won their lands with this sword: with my sword I will defend them against all usurpers.' This answer gives the key to the barons' attitude. Edward did not press the matter too far, but made the compromise that permanent possession since the time of Richard I was a sufficient answer to 'Quo warranto?'

It was the turn of the Church next, which had grown rich by the bequests of pious benefactors. During the twelfth and the thirteenth centuries, many grants of land were made to religious houses. But land left to the Church was a direct loss to the Crown. Other lands were subject to the usual feudal payments—to an inheritance tax as one holder succeeded another, or, if there were no heir, the land might revert or 'escheat' to the Crown. These things could not happen in the case of Church lands; for the Church was a corporation, and a corporation never dies. Such lands fell into mortmain—into the 'dead hand' of the Church, and so were a permanent loss to the royal revenue. By the Statute of Mortmain (1279) Edward prohibited the giving of land to any religious person or other person without the royal licence.<sup>1</sup> In other ways Edward I increased his control over the Church. He issued a writ, known from its opening words as *Circumspecte agatis*—'see that you act circumspectly'. This was addressed to his judges and gave a list of the cases that might be tried in the Church Courts.

<sup>1</sup> In practice the new law did little to check the gifts of land to the Church, since the royal licence was easily obtained.

Edward also insisted, though Pope and Archbishop objected, that the clergy should make money grants to help to finance the king.

Next came encouragement for the growing class of merchants. The Statute of Acton Burnell (1283) laid down that a man might legally be imprisoned for debt, and made to forfeit his goods or even his land, thus for the first time enabling merchants to deal with dishonest debtors.

Statute of  
Acton Burnell, 1283

The First Statute of Winchester (1285) dealt with local disorders. Penalties were to be imposed on men who concealed felons—for 'robberies, murders, burnings, and thefts grew daily more numerous than they used to be'. All were to join in the 'Hue and Cry' for suspected criminals, and to keep 'Watch and Ward' over strangers and shut the town gates at night.

First  
Statute of  
Winchester  
1285

One of the most important of Edward's land laws was the Second Statute of Westminster (1285). This Statute is usually known from its opening clause as *De donis conditionalibus* ('concerning conditional gifts'); and it established the system of 'entail', by which an owner of land could leave his estates to his eldest son on condition that the lands remained undivided for ever and passed from heir to heir, thus restricting a spendthrift holder from alienating the land. This Statute has affected the ownership of land in England to this day.<sup>1</sup> It has had great influence on English society by encouraging the growth of large estates instead of dividing them among several sons. The latter practice became customary in France and Germany, and it did much to foster the growth of a large 'noble class' in those countries.

Second  
Statute of  
Westminster, 1285

## 2. Parliament

Edward's famous statutes were presented at assemblies of the Great Council, and they generally bear the name of the town to which the Council was summoned. There were also several full 'Parliaments' in his reign (1275, 1295, &c.). Like most institutions which have grown great from small beginnings, the origins of Parliament are difficult to trace. The very word Parliament has changed its meaning: the old French word, *parlement*,<sup>2</sup> meant a parley, or talk, and it was

Edward I  
and Parliament

<sup>1</sup> Lord Birkenhead's Bill of 1925 at last put an end to the creation of new entails.

<sup>2</sup> There were French and Spanish Parliaments too (the Spanish—the

first applied to what happened when the assembly met, and not, as later, to the assembly itself.

In the thirteenth century the king was the most important, indeed the essential, element, in any Parliament; the barons, lay and spiritual, whom he summoned to meet him came next in importance, then, very much last, came the representatives of the Commons. In its origins Parliament began as the Great Council of the realm, in which the king took counsel and parleyed with the chief lords of the lands of England. In its fullest form the Great Council became known as *Curia Regis*, and this was (as has been seen)<sup>1</sup> the source and centre of government, of law and justice. There was no hard and fast rule as to who should be summoned to the Great Council. Just as only those wise men were summoned to the Witan whose wisdom was apparent to the Saxon king, so his Norman and Plantagenet successors pleased themselves whom they summoned. Naturally the king insisted on the attendance of all the royal officials and ministers; he also summoned, by special writ, some of the bishops, some of the abbots, and some of the earls and barons<sup>2</sup>—all of them lords of land.

The Barons  
in the Great  
Council

In Henry III's reign the word 'Parliament' began to be attached to this Great Council, and two or more representatives of the shires were occasionally summoned to it, as by John in 1213 and Henry III in 1254. It was already the custom for knights representing the shires to meet the king's officers in the shire courts: it was no great step to make them come to Westminster to meet the king in person. Then, as trade increased and towns grew, two citizens from the chief towns were summoned during the reign of Henry III, notably by Simon de Montfort to his Parliament of 1265. The normal function of these shire and town representatives was to grant an aid to the king. This was a less cumbrous, more businesslike procedure than separate negotiations with the counties and towns;

The  
'Commons'

Cortes—was a hundred years older than ours); but from the sixteenth century they, unlike the English Parliament, came to naught.

<sup>1</sup> See above, pp. 99 and 125.

<sup>2</sup> The number of the barons varied; for example, Edward I summoned 41 barons to his Parliament of 1295 and 99 to that of 1300; Edward II summoned 90 in 1321 and only 52 in the following year.

and because the knights and citizens represented these communes—communities of shire and town—they came to be called the 'Commons'.

The meeting of the Great Council or Parliament became the most convenient means of granting money to the king for the business of governing the realm. This function belonged to all three estates—Clergy, Lords, and Commons. It is easy to understand that to be a shire representative was regarded as a burden rather than a privilege. Knights returning from Westminster had to bring back to their counties the unpopular news of fresh taxation; and in one instance two knights from Oxfordshire fled the country on the news of their election and summons to Parliament. But the time was to come when these representatives looked upon this burdensome duty in a different light—when they realized that by helping to control the king's purse they could also help to control the king's policy. Taxation

But Parliament, like the Great Council, was not only a taxing machine. Having its source in *Curia Regis*, it was also a Court of Justice—as the words 'The High Court of Parliament' still remind us—though this function passed finally to the Lords alone. The king used to listen to many 'petitions' which the knights presented to him on behalf of their local people. If he granted them he said: 'Le roy le veult' (the king wills it); if not, he said: 'Le roy s'avisera' (the king will consider it)—which meant No! The High Court of Parliament

Thus Parliament, whether it did or did not contain 'representatives', was an assembly summoned to fulfil many functions—a court of justice, a tax-granter, a debating council where national policy was discussed, and in course of time a legislative body. Under Edward III the summoning of the knights and citizens to take part in these various functions had become customary. In his time, too, the knights and citizens drew apart from the lords to form a separate 'House'—the House of Commons. Various functions of Parliament

Historians have generally regarded the full Parliament of 1295 as the Model Parliament, though Edward I would have been surprised to know that it was the 'model' for future parliaments. 'What touches all should be approved by all' The Model Parliament 1295

said the writs summoning the ecclesiastics to this parliament. The dangers, in 1295, were pressing enough. Edward had embarked on a war with Philip IV of France, consequent upon the French king's claim to and invasion of part of Gascony; and the French had also sacked and burnt Dover. Worse still, the king whom Edward had placed on the Scottish throne—John Balliol—had been practically deposed by his nobles, who that summer (1295) made an alliance with the King of France. The king therefore summoned to his Parliament of 1295 all classes of his subjects to provide funds to combat the national peril: barons lay and cleric, knights and citizens, and representatives of the clergy. All met on the same date and in the same place—Westminster Hall. But the result was somewhat disappointing. The barons and knights offered a tax of an eleventh on their goods, the clergy a tenth, and the towns a seventh. Edward expected more, but nevertheless he embarked on his two wars.

The Gascon campaign of 1295 was a failure; the English army narrowly escaped total destruction, and a French fleet was preparing to invade England. Next year a truce was made with Philip, leaving most of Gascony in French hands. But the Scottish campaign led to the victory of Dunbar (1296), the deposition of Balliol, and the temporary conquest of Scotland.<sup>1</sup>

Parliament  
at Salisbury  
1297

Edward was not so fortunate when he assembled a Parliament of barons at Salisbury (1297), to place before them his proposals for a fresh campaign in France. One section of the baronage, which had long resented the growth of the royal power, found a leader in Bigod, Earl of Norfolk and Earl Marshal of England. Edward demanded that Norfolk should lead an expedition to Gascony, while he himself went to Flanders. Taking advantage of a technical point which required the Earl Marshal to attend the king in person, Bigod refused to go to Gascony without him. Edward flew into a passion. 'By God, Sir Earl,' said he, making a pun on the earl's name, 'thou shalt either go or hang.' 'By God, Sir King,' replied Bigod coolly, 'I will neither go nor hang!' The Parliament broke up in disorder, and another Barons' War seemed imminent.

<sup>1</sup> See below, pp. 176-185.



Edward, however, made various unauthorized exactions to raise funds, and then sailed for Flanders. The baronial opposition at once made its protest felt. Edward of Carnarvon, the king's heir, a boy of thirteen, was forced to reissue and confirm (1297) the Great Charter of 1215—in that interval of eighty years Parliament itself had grown up and become the guardian of the Charter. This 'Confirmation' is noteworthy because it renounced certain recent unauthorized taxes. The king, at Ghent, ratified the action.<sup>1</sup>

During his last years Edward, now an old man, was lonely, and out of sympathy with the new generation; Scotland, too, was a perpetual source of anxiety. On his last attempt to subdue the northern kingdom Edward died (1307). To his less fortunate son he passed on both the problem of the Scots and the problem of the barons.

Edward I spoke English as well as French; he was the first king of England since the Conqueror to bear an English name; he was in spirit a thoroughly English king. He was a great man in a great era. He strengthened the national monarchy, the foundations of which had been laid by the Conqueror, his son Henry I, and his grandson Henry II. And though the French king drove him into war, Edward abandoned the dream of a revival of the Angevin Empire. Instead, he aimed at strengthening his hold on all parts of Britain by asserting against Wales and Scotland the rights given by feudal law to an overlord against rebellious vassals. However, his policy in Scotland was (after starting well) a complete failure, and his policy in Wales, Scotland, and France was more costly than the country could bear; he left the finances of England in chaos, and the troubles of his successor were not entirely due to Edward II's own shortcomings.

### 3. *The Conquest of Wales*

#### (i) *Early History.*

The English conquest of Wales, which is one of the outstanding events of the reign of Edward I, formed the final

<sup>1</sup> 'The lustre of Edward I's motto, "Keep troth" (*Pactum Serva*), is tarnished by his application to the Pope for absolution from his promises' made in the Confirmation of the Charters (Pollard).

stage of a long struggle which had lasted for eight centuries. A brief sketch of the history of Wales is necessary for an understanding of Edward's achievement.

The land which the Saxons called Wales, which means the land of the stranger, is called by its own people Cymru, or the land of comrades. After the collapse of the Roman government the Welsh for long held all the western parts of Britain, from Cumberland to Cornwall. But the absorption of Lancashire into the kingdom of Northumbria,<sup>1</sup> and of Somerset and Devon into the kingdom of Wessex,<sup>2</sup> for ever divided the ancient land of the Britons. Thenceforth Wales meant the country west of the Severn and Dee. Offa, King of Mercia, by building his famous Dyke from the Dee to the Wye, further limited the territory of the 'stranger'; but from his time to the Norman Conquest—a period of three centuries—no further Saxon advance into Wales was made.

Wales in  
Saxon times

Wales had never been a united country, nor were its people of one race: the character of the country is not conducive to union. There were several princes in early medieval Wales; inter-tribal war was common. Welsh society was based on the family group, and the wealth of the family consisted largely of sheep and cattle—movable property which was often an incentive to acts of violence on the part of greedy neighbours. Add to this the constant strife between Welsh and Saxon on the border, and we see that Wales in the Middle Ages was by no means so tranquil as its peaceful valleys to-day would suggest.

Disunion

But there is another side to the picture. The Welsh are a poetic race, and have never, even in their most barbarous days, been insensible to the beauty of their land. Their language had attained a settled literary form long before English achieved this distinction. Welsh literature, like the Norse sagas, was created by the songs of the 'bards', whose poems were repeated from one generation to another.

Language  
and song

The  
Welsh  
March

With the coming of the Normans the fortunes of Wales changed. The Conqueror set up three great earldoms to control the Welsh March (border), centred at Chester, Shrewsbury, and Hereford. These places were the bases of attack on north

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 32.

<sup>2</sup> See pp. 32 and 52.

Wales, mid-Wales, and south Wales respectively. In Rufus's time, the tide of conquest flowed more rapidly; all south and part of central Wales passed to the Normans. South Wales became studded with Norman castles;<sup>1</sup> while the foundation of Pembroke Castle (1090) marked the advance of the conquerors to the western sea. The Norman barons were notorious for their cruelty, even in that barbarous age. The ruins of castles, which are still to be seen every few miles in south Wales, shroud a history which is perhaps best forgotten.

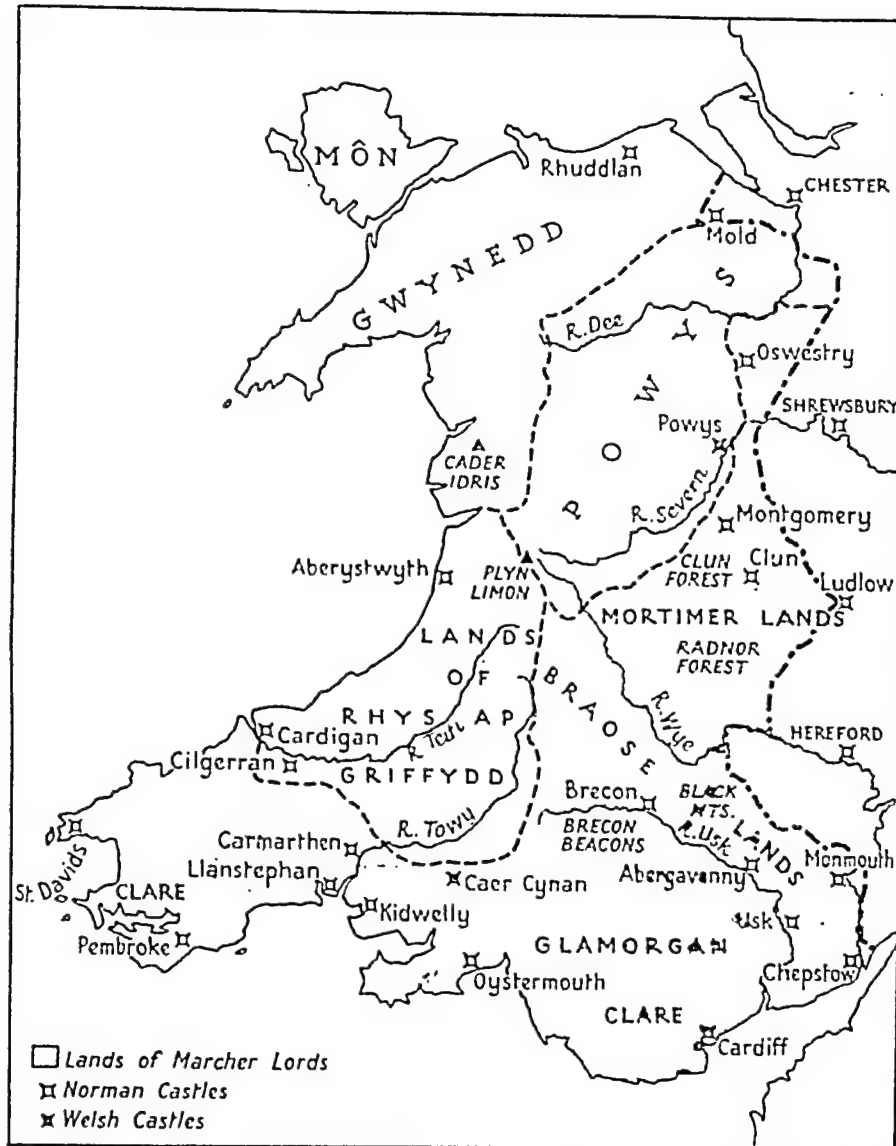
A rally of the Welsh of north Wales (or Gwynedd) expelled the Normans from Anglesey at the end of Rufus's reign. It was Gwynedd, with its stronghold of Snowdonia, that defied the invader longest, whereas in the south and central parts of the country the Normans had come to stay. By a chain of fortresses from Chepstow to Pembroke the Marcher lords held the south—Monmouth, Chepstow, Abergavenny, Usk, and Cardiff Castles all date from this period, although certain districts held out against the intruder.<sup>2</sup> In mid-Wales, or Powys, the Red Castle (Castel Coch), which the English called the Castle of the Pool (Welshpool), was the seat of independent Welsh princes.

The anarchy of England under Stephen allowed the Welsh to regain a good deal of what they had lost; and even Henry II was unable to prevent the union of south and central Wales under Rhys ap Gruffydd, or the Lord Rhys (a prince of the royal house of Deheubarth). Indeed, the dangerous success of the

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter IV, Appendix.

<sup>2</sup> The Vale of the Towy, for example, was a Welsh preserve, though three Norman castles—Carmarthen, Kidwelly, and Llanstephan—were built where the estuary of the Towy broadens into Carmarthen Bay. These fortresses were often taken and re-taken during the following two centuries of struggle. An attempt to extend the Norman dominion into Ceredigion (Cardiganshire) was not very successful; Cilgerran Castle, on the Teifi, was first built about 1110. About the same time the princes of the house of Powys were dispossessed of their lands in Ceredigion, which were given to Gilbert de Clare, a member of the famous Norman house which afterwards began the conquest of Ireland, and to him is attributed the founding of Cardigan and Aberystwyth Castles. It was the de Clares, too, who settled south Pembrokeshire with Flemish and English colonists; the district is still called 'Little England', and bears a non-Welsh character to this day.

de Clare family in Pembrokeshire made Henry glad to have a Welsh ally to keep these Norman upstarts in check, especially



WALES IN 1177

The de Clares when Richard de Clare (Strongbow) founded what threatened to be an independent Norman state in Ireland (1170). Henry, therefore, was content to let the Lord Rhys dominate Wales, as long as he kept the lesser princes in order.

The Lord Rhys (died 1197) was the last great native ruler of south Wales; after his time the national leadership passed to the north, Gwynedd. Llewelyn ap Iorwerth, Prince of Gwynedd, called Llewelyn the Great, was the principal figure in Wales during his long reign of nearly half a century (1194-1240). He joined the baronial party against King John, and was allowed to occupy Shrewsbury. He made a treaty with the young Henry III at Worcester (1218), when the royal castles of Montgomery, Cardigan, and Carmarthen were given up to him. Llewelyn was now master of Wales. He was lord of Gwynedd, he had annexed Powys, while in south Wales the sons of the Lord Rhys acknowledged him as overlord. Thus, after a century and a half of Norman and Angevin conquest, Wales was unexpectedly united under a native ruler. The hopes of the Welsh rose high, and the bards sang the praises of Llewelyn, 'the eagle of men, that loves not to lie nor sleep'. He was an enlightened ruler, and a patron of the bards and of the monks. He tried to end the strife between Welsh and English by marrying his daughters to the most important Marcher lords; but the hopes of a more peaceful Wales were never realized until his own royal house had ended its stormy history. Llewelyn the Great died (1240) at Aberconway, in the Cistercian monastery which he had founded there.

Llewelyn  
the Great  
1194-1240

His death was followed by a period of decline and disorder, during which the English regained Cardigan and Carmarthen. They also annexed (1247) the Four Cantreds (see map, p. 173)—the debatable land between the Conway and the Dee estuary.<sup>1</sup> From Deganwy Castle, near Llandudno, the English could look across at Snowdonia, where the grandsons of Llewelyn were once more confined to the ancient cradle of their house. Shortly afterwards (1254), Henry III created his son Edward, Earl of Chester, lord of the Four Cantreds and of Cardigan and Carmarthen.

Prince  
Edward Earl  
of Chester  
1254

While the future conqueror of Wales thus began his first contact with the country, Llewelyn ap Gruffydd, grandson of Llewelyn the Great, began his reign as Prince of Gwynedd (1254-82). Taking advantage of the troubles of the Barons'

<sup>1</sup> The Four Cantreds, or Perveddwlad, which means the 'middle country'.

Llewelyn II  
1254-82

War, Llewelyn successfully invaded the Four Cantreds, and reasserted his supremacy over Powys. Then, pushing his way southwards, as his grandfather had done, he reached Brecon, and in a short time won complete ascendancy in south Wales. He became the ally of Simon de Montfort, and after the latter's overthrow the English were obliged to acknowledge Llewelyn's conquests. By the Treaty of Montgomery (1267), he was confirmed in the title of Prince of Wales, which he had assumed. His dominions now extended as far south as the Brecon Beacons. 'Such a union', observed the chronicler, 'had never before been, since north and south had always been opposed.' At the accession of Edward I, Llewelyn occupied a prouder position than any Welsh prince since the Norman Conquest (see map opposite).

Treaty of  
Montgomery,  
1267

(ii) *The Edwardian Conquest.*

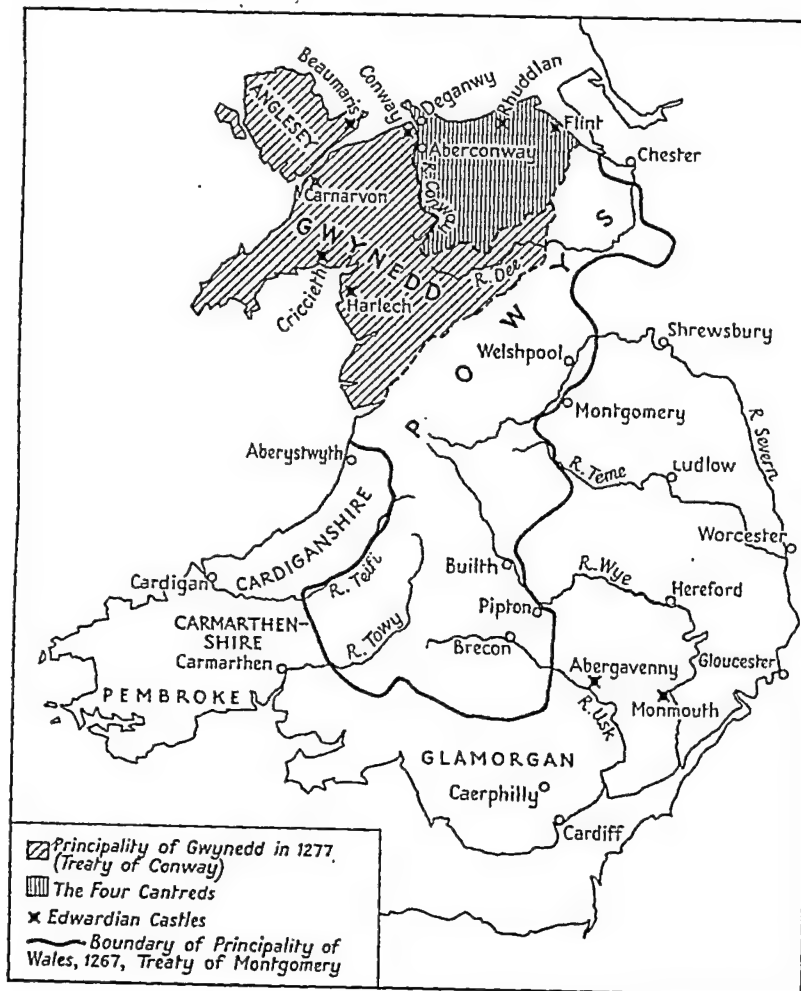
Edward I's  
First Welsh  
War, 1276-7

Llewelyn probably under-estimated the character of the new English king, for he began by refusing homage to Edward I as his overlord. Edward thereupon captured Llewelyn's betrothed wife, Eleanor, Simon de Montfort's daughter, and detained her in England. He next assembled the feudal army at Worcester (1276). As soon as the king appeared in Wales, the southern princes threw off their allegiance to Llewelyn, who found himself thrown back on the defences of his native Gwynedd. Edward proceeded to Chester, and slowly conquered the Four Cantreds, advancing from Rhuddlan to Deganwy. Llewelyn thought he would be able to prolong his resistance in Snowdonia. But he had reckoned without Edward's fleet from the Cinque Ports, which cut off Anglesey, the source of Llewelyn's corn supply, from the mainland. Seeing that he would be starved into surrender, Llewelyn came to terms. The Treaty of Conway (1277) reduced him to the position he had held thirty years before (see map). He had to give up all his conquests, and to pay a crushing indemnity. But he was allowed to marry Eleanor; and Edward himself attended the wedding at Worcester.

Treaty of  
Conway  
1277

But the Welsh of the reconquered districts were unhappy under foreign rule. The English king did not keep his promise to respect their laws. Discontent grew; and at the end of five

years David, Llewelyn's restless brother, headed a revolt, in which Llewelyn himself was soon involved. David raised mid-



WALES UNDER LLEWELYN AP GRUFFYDD

Wales, and took Aberystwyth Castle, while Llewelyn crossed the Conway once more.

Edward now decided that the country must be finally conquered. Advancing from Rhuddlan, he repeated his tactics of five years before, and once again Llewelyn found himself blockaded in Snowdonia. Escaping this time, he made his

Second  
Welsh War  
1282-3

way to the Wye Valley, hoping to be able to organize a counter-attack from the south against Edward's advance. But he was killed in a skirmish near Builth (December 1282). The last hopes of an independent Wales were now centred in his brother David, who prolonged the struggle for a few months; then he was betrayed and brought before Edward's Parliament at Shrewsbury (1283). There he was condemned to death as a traitor, and suffered the dreadful penalty which the law exacted. Edward's treatment of the last native Prince of Wales did not endear him to his Welsh subjects; in fact, says a Welsh historian, it 'aroused a hereditary hatred which it took centuries of national neighbourly actions and of wise legislation to efface'.

Meanwhile Edward's new castles were being built in north Wales—splendid fortresses, with their encircling walls flanked with towers, vastly superior to the simple structures of Norman days. Snowdonia was surrounded by a ring of these new fortresses,<sup>1</sup> the model of which was Caerphilly Castle<sup>2</sup> (Glamorgan), 'the most scientifically constructed castle in all Wales'.

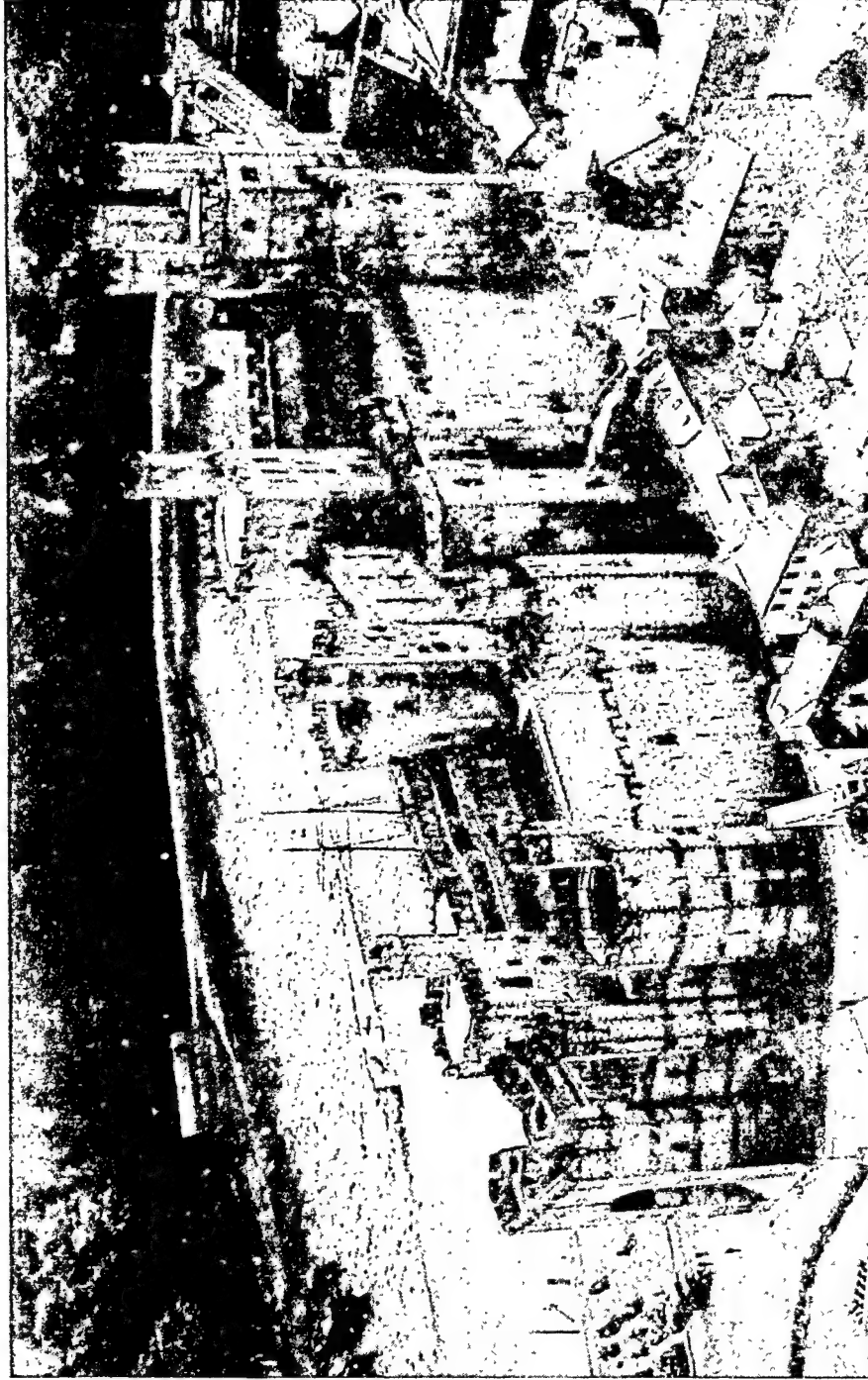
By the Statute of Rhuddlan (1284), Llewelyn's principality of Gwynedd was annexed to the Crown, and divided into the three shires of Anglesey, Carnarvon, and Merioneth. In addition, Edward encouraged the settlement of Englishmen in new towns which he founded, or in old ones to which he gave charters, such as Carnarvon, Cardiff, Cardigan, and Welshpool. Apart from these changes, Wales was not much altered by Edward's conquest. He disturbed neither the Marcher lords in their strongholds, nor the native Welsh in the exercise of their ancient customs and laws. The Welsh language and literature continued to flourish, and Welsh nationality was preserved.

In 1301 Edward revived the title of Prince of Wales in the person of his heir, who had been born at Carnarvon, and who was by this time nearly seventeen years old. The lords of the

<sup>1</sup> Conway, Carnarvon, Criccieth, and Harlech. Beaumaris (on Anglesey) was not built until 1295, after Madog's revolt.

<sup>2</sup> Caerphilly had been built (1267) by Gilbert, Earl of Gloucester. Like Kenilworth, it was once surrounded by an artificially formed lake, which has, however, been drained in modern times.





EDWARD I'S CASTLES  
AN AERIAL VIEW OF CARNARVON CASTLE

Marches and the Welsh princes were required to do homage to the prince instead of to the king. The revival of the title was a concession to Welsh feeling. The title was again revived by Edward III, whose eldest son, the Black Prince, was made Prince of Wales. The eldest son of the reigning king of England has always borne the title from that day to this.

Results  
of the  
Conquest

The war had been bitter, as all wars of conquest are; but the wise policy of Edward, in leaving the conquered country alone after its subjection, bore good fruit. The Welsh, once they had become reconciled to the final loss of their independence, became good subjects of the English kings; and it was the Welsh archers, with their long-bows, who turned the scale in the wars between England and France. But the country retained, and still retains, its separate character and language. The words of the old Welsh chief to King Henry II were prophetic:

'This nation, O king, may now, as in times of yore, be troubled and greatly weakened and destroyed by your and other power . . . but it can never be wholly subdued by the wrath of man, unless the wrath of God shall concur. Nor do I think that any other nation than this of Wales, or any other tongue, whatever may come to pass hereafter, shall in the day of severe searching before the Supreme Judge, answer for this corner of the earth.'

#### 4. *Scotland and the War of Independence*

##### (i) *The Canmore Dynasty.*

Duncan and  
Macbeth

In a former Chapter<sup>1</sup>, we saw how Scotland was at last united under the rule of Duncan I (1034-40). This king was Shakespeare's Duncan, who was murdered and succeeded by Macbeth. The usurper's life and reign were ended by his defeat

Malcolm III  
1057-93

at the hands of Malcolm III (Canmore), Duncan's son, whose reign (1057-93) was one of the most important in Scottish history. Malcolm founded a dynasty which ruled Scotland for two centuries. Its work was to create the Scottish nation out of the four peoples, widely differing in race and speech, which had been brought together under Duncan I.

Malcolm Canmore married an English wife, Margaret, sister of Edgar the Atheling<sup>2</sup>, head of the royal Saxon house of England,

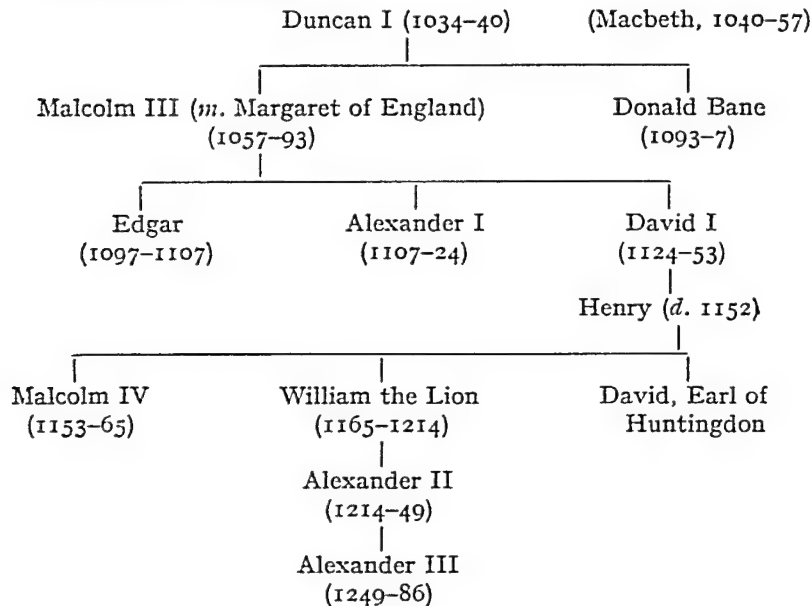
<sup>1</sup> Chapter III, sec. 7.

<sup>2</sup> See table, p. 81.

and claimant to the throne of Edward the Confessor. Queen Margaret was a remarkable woman. It was her object to introduce English customs into what she regarded as her husband's barbarous Celtic kingdom. Her six sons all bore English, not Scottish names. Three of them<sup>1</sup> reigned after their father, and carried on his and the queen's work.<sup>2</sup>

David I, the 'paragon of all his kin', who reigned for thirty years (1124-53), moulded Scotland upon an English model. He made lavish grants of land to the Norman barons who followed him from the court of his sister, the Queen of England (wife of Henry I). The old Scottish nobility also received charters making them lords of lands which they had hitherto held only by tribal custom. Thus gradually the feudal structure David I  
1124-53  
Feudal  
System

<sup>1</sup> The Canmore Dynasty:



<sup>2</sup> There was a short revival, after the deaths of Malcolm and Margaret, of the native party which favoured the old Celtic customs; this revival is marked by the reign of Donald Bane (1093-7), Malcolm's brother. Aided by Norman soldiers from England, Edgar (1097-1107) overthrew Donald Bane. But the next king, Alexander I, ruled only over the Celts of the north; his younger brother, David, ruled Lothian and Strathclyde. This unhappy division was ended when David succeeded to the throne (1124), and the work of Queen Margaret was continued.

—king, landholder, serf—became as common in Scotland as in England. In another sphere, too, he completed what Queen Margaret had begun. He reorganized the Scottish Church, founded cathedrals and monasteries, endowed them lavishly, and filled them with English and Norman clergy.

The Norman system of land-holding, then, from David's time, became common throughout the Lowlands. In the western Highlands, however, a different system prevailed. There, among the Gaelic-speaking population, the Norman law and custom did not penetrate; instead, there was the organization of the clan.

Clan  
System

The basis of the clan system was not land-holding; it was rather the blood-tie, which bound all members of the clan together in a common loyalty to their chief. Fighting members of other clans was a frequent occupation of the Highlanders; nor was inter-clan warfare ever put down by the independent kings of Scotland. The clan system, with its customs, good and bad, endured till the eighteenth century.

David I took advantage of the chaotic state of England in Stephen's reign to push his southern boundary to the Tees; but his grandsons, Malcolm IV and William the Lion, who in turn succeeded him, were unable to hold the land he had gained. They were powerless against the superior forces of Henry II. William the Lion was captured by an English army at Alnwick and forced to do homage to Henry II for his whole kingdom (Treaty of Falaise, 1174).

William the  
Lion, 1165-  
1214

Though Richard I released William the Lion from his homage in return for a sum of money (Treaty of Canterbury, 1189),<sup>1</sup> succeeding kings of England tried to enforce their claim to the overlordship of Scotland. Both John and Henry III revived the claim, which Alexander II (1214-49) and Alexander III (1249-86) did their best to deny. Once the Pope intervened (1235) on behalf of Henry III and called upon Alexander III to do homage to Henry. He threatened to send a Legate to bring Alexander to reason, but the Scotsman frightened the visitor off. 'They be savage and uncivilized men who inhabit my land', he wrote, 'and thirst for human gore.' The question of homage remained unsettled.

Alexander  
II and Alex-  
ander III

The thirteenth century was a period of great prosperity in

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 131.

Scotland. During it, the peace with England was rarely broken, and the kingdom was well administered during the long reigns of the two Alexanders. At the same time the age-long warfare with Norway was brought to a successful conclusion. Alexander III, by winning the battle of Largs (1263), forced the King of Norway to give up the Hebrides (1266) which the Norwegians had held since the days of their pirate Norse ancestors.<sup>1</sup>

Scotland, at the death of Alexander III, was a well-organized kingdom, depending on the power of the Crown to prevent the country from falling into feudal disorder. The victory over Norway had done much to foster national pride. But the Norwegian war was a war of offence: the long war with England, which had not yet begun, was a fight for freedom. When the menace of the English conquest appeared, the Scots were a people well capable of defending their national independence.

(ii) *Balliol, Wallace, Bruce.*

The tragic death of Alexander III (1286) was an event as unexpected as it was fateful of consequences. An accident altered the history of Scotland. One March day Alexander rode out of Edinburgh to join his queen at Kinghorn over the water. He was ferried across the Forth to Inverkeithing—where the Forth Bridge now stands. Then, in the falling dusk, he began the ten-mile ride along the cliffs to Kinghorn. But ere he reached his journey's end, his horse stumbled and threw him over the cliff's edge. Anxious searchers went to the bottom of the cliff; but the king was dead when they found him.

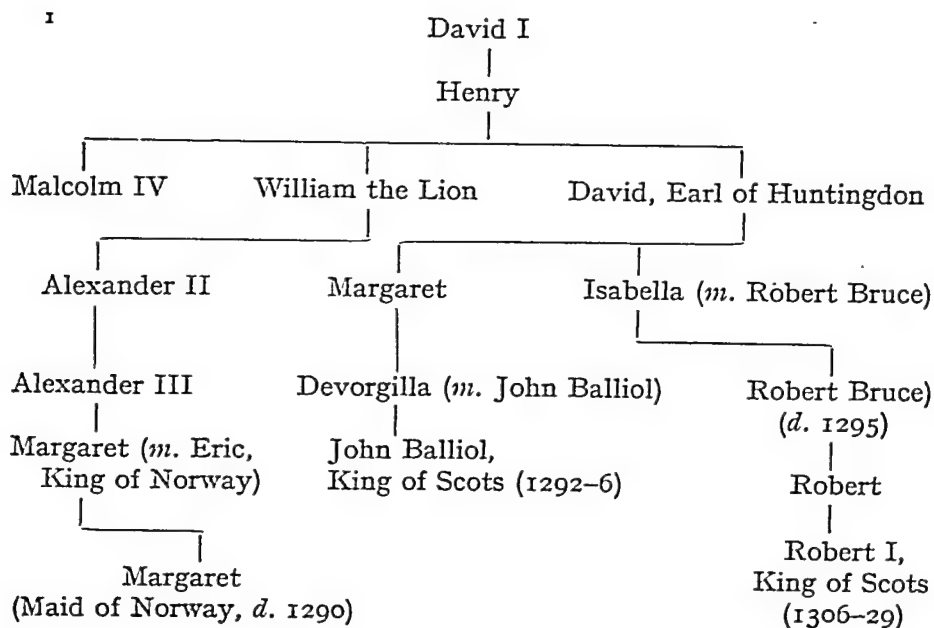
Alexander left his kingdom without a male heir. His daughter had married the King of Norway, and her daughter Margaret—the Maid of Norway—was proclaimed Queen of Scotland. The English king, Edward I, now suggested that the young queen should marry his son and heir, Edward, and so bring about the union of the two kingdoms. The Scots lords consented to the plan, and the details were arranged at the Treaty of Brigham (1290). But another tragedy intervened, postponing the union of Scotland and England for three

<sup>1</sup> The Orkneys and Shetlands remained under the kings of Norway till the fifteenth century; they were annexed by Scotland in 1472.

hundred years. The Maid sailed from Norway. But she never reached Scotland, where a throne and a husband awaited her. She died in the Orkneys, and Scotland was left without a sovereign (1290).

There were now no fewer than thirteen claimants to the vacant throne, and the country was threatened with civil war between the rival partisans. To avoid this calamity certain of the Scottish nobles, headed by the Bishop of St. Andrews, appealed to Edward of England to decide between the claimants. Edward was anxious to do this, since it gave him the opportunity of asserting his right to the title of Lord Paramount of Scotland. The chief Scottish barons met him at Norham Castle, on the Tweed (1291), and admitted his title; they also agreed to abide by his decision with regard to the succession.

The two competitors with the best claims were John Balliol and Robert Bruce, both descended from daughters of David, Earl of Huntingdon, younger brother of William the Lion.<sup>1</sup> Edward ordered the case to be tried before a court consisting of 80 Scotsmen and 24 Englishmen, the latter including some of Edward's wisest lawyers. The court decided in favour of John Balliol, to whom Edward accordingly awarded the crown (1292).



The Scots probably regarded the act of homage which their new king performed to Edward I as nothing more than a formality; but Edward had other views. He asserted his right to hear appeals in England against the decisions of the Scottish courts; he even demanded that the Scottish king should attend the English Parliament. The last straw was the request for Scottish troops to take part in Edward's war in Gascony. The Scottish king was placed in an impossible position. If he resisted Edward he would call down the might of the stronger kingdom upon his people; if he did not, his people would rise against him for submitting to the hated foreigner. He chose the path of resistance, and made a treaty of alliance with France—an alliance that lasted till Tudor times—at the very moment when Edward was about to make war on that country (1295).

Edward's  
demands

After this act of defiance Edward crossed the Border, and took Berwick after a short siege. The cruel sack of this town was quite in accordance with the recognized rules of medieval warfare. But the ruin of one of the most flourishing ports of Britain, and the cold-blooded massacre of many of its defenceless citizens, could scarcely have endeared Edward to his Scottish subjects—as he now considered them. The Scots under Balliol tried to resist his advance, but Edward routed them at Dunbar (1296). He then deposed Balliol and annexed the kingdom. To mark his triumph he carried off the sacred coronation stone<sup>1</sup> from Scone and brought it to Westminster Abbey, where it now forms the base of the Coronation Chair. At the same time, and in a still meaner spirit, Edward caused all the Scottish records he could find to be taken to London. This was part of his settled policy of crushing Scottish national feeling. It is difficult to blame Scotsmen for their indignation at these acts. Edward had driven Balliol to defy him; then he had crushed the unfortunate king and annexed his kingdom. But, in doing so, he had aroused a spirit of resistance in the conquered country—a spirit which he could not overcome.

Dunbar  
1296

The first man to give a lead to Scotland was William Wallace, a knight of Elderslie. Little is known of Wallace, who was an

Wallace

<sup>1</sup> Alleged to be the stone on which Jacob laid his head on the night of his dream of the Angels' Ladder.

obscure warrior receiving little support from the jealous, self-seeking nobles. Nevertheless he was the people's hero. 'He arises at his hour, like Jeanne d'Arc; like her, he wins a great victory; like her, he receives a sword from a saint; like her, his limbs are scattered by the English; like her, he awakens a people; he falls into obscurity, he is betrayed and slain' (Andrew Lang).

Stirling  
Bridge, 1297

Wallace's great victory was won at Stirling Bridge (1297). Earl Warenne, whom Edward had made governor of Scotland, was at the head of the English army. He approached Stirling from the south; Wallace's army lay across the river to the north. Many battles in history have been lost through the incompetence of generals: the battle of Stirling Bridge was one of them. The Forth at Stirling was crossed by a narrow bridge, over which it was only possible for men to advance in file, two by two. Warenne refused to take advantage of a ford not far away, and ordered the army to cross by the bridge. His men paid the penalty for this piece of stupidity. When about a third of the English army had crossed the river, Wallace's men swooped down on the bridge, and blocked the way to its further passage. The English who had crossed were massacred; those who remained on the south side fled on seeing the fate of their countrymen.

Falkirk  
1298

Next year Edward marched into Scotland to avenge the defeat of Stirling Bridge. He routed Wallace's spearmen at the battle of Falkirk (1298), where the deadly aim of his Welsh and English bowmen won the day. Most of the Scottish nobles thereupon made peace with Edward; they were fearful of the fate of their southern lands, for many of them held estates in England. Among those who submitted to Edward was Robert Bruce, grandson of the claimant of 1292 and destined to be King of Scotland.

Wallace  
captured  
1305

Edward set up a council of regency, and expected the country to remain quiet. Wallace was an outlaw in hiding. Seven years passed by. Then Wallace was betrayed and delivered up to Edward (1305). He was tried as a traitor; he was condemned; he was hanged, drawn, and quartered; the quarters of his body were placed upon the gates of Newcastle, Berwick, Stirling, and Perth. But the spirit, which is greater than the



body, lived after him; and the spirit of Wallace still inspired Scotland.

His successor, as leader of the people, came from an unexpected quarter. Robert Bruce, Earl of Carrick, had several times submitted to Edward; he seemed just an ordinary fortune-hunter, anxious to save his own skin and to be on the winning side. The year after Wallace's death he quarrelled with his cousin, Red Comyn, and stabbed him to death in a church at Dumfries. It was certainly an unpromising beginning to the career of a national leader. But, as Andrew Lang says, 'the murder of Comyn closed from Bruce the path of returning'. Now a murderer, he was an outlaw like Wallace. He consequently threw caution to the winds, and risked all on the highest stake. He proclaimed himself leader of the national resistance; he was hailed as king, and crowned at Scone (1306). Robert  
Bruce

It was with great difficulty that King Robert maintained himself on his perilous throne, for he had many enemies at home as well as in England. But Fortune, which sometimes favours the reckless, came to his rescue at the beginning of his reign. King Edward, coming north to subdue the rebellious kingdom, fell ill at Burgh-on-Sands, and died within sight of Scotland (1307). With his great enemy dead, Bruce was free to deal with his native foes, for Edward II abandoned the projected invasion and returned home. For seven more years Bruce struggled with his enemies, the Scottish nobles who were jealous of his seizure of the crown, and who sided with the English. But at last all their castles fell save Stirling, the gateway to the Highlands. King of  
Scots, 1306

In the summer of 1314 Edward II raised an army from England, Wales, and Gascony, and invaded Scotland. He intended to defeat the Scottish army and then relieve Stirling. It was Midsummer Day when the two armies met two miles south of the castle. The Scots were on rising ground above the little stream called the Bannock Burn. The English were in a bad position, hemmed in by woods and marshes; their cavalry were too cramped to move against the Scottish spearmen, who inflicted great damage. Edward at last got his archers into position, hoping that they would repeat the slaughter of Falkirk. But Bruce's horsemen fell on their flanks Death of  
Edward I  
1307

Bannock-  
burn, 1314

and scattered them. Soon everything was in confusion; Edward lost all control of the battle. Great slaughter was inflicted on the English, and at last the king turned and fled, an example which was followed by many of his men. Thousands perished, trapped in the ravine through which the Bannock Burn flowed. Edward reached Dunbar and there took ship to Berwick; the attempt to conquer Scotland was abandoned.

The day of the 'bloody fauld' of Bannockburn was a proud one in Scottish memories.<sup>1</sup> On that day strong tyranny was overthrown by a despised and weaker foe, as Goliath fell before David. The Scots whom Bruce led would not sell their freedom

'for all the gold in warld that is'.

After Bannockburn the Scots were soon invading northern England, and the war was not ended till after Edward II's death. Peace was eventually made at Northampton (1328), when Edward III acknowledged Bruce as king, and abandoned all claims to his throne. Next year Bruce died (1329), leaving his kingdom to his infant son, David II (1329-71). In this reign Edward Balliol, John Balliol's son, invaded Scotland, and was assisted by an English army, which defeated the Scots at Halidon Hill, near Berwick (1333). The young David was sent to France for safety, but on the outbreak of the Anglo-French war, which proved to be the saving of Scotland, he returned home. In the year of Crecy (1346) he invaded England and was taken prisoner at the battle of Neville's Cross; his country had to pay a heavy ransom for his release. When he died his throne passed to his sister's son, Robert Stuart<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Robert Burns, in the words which he puts into the mouth of Bruce before the battle, expresses the spirit of the struggle for independence:

Scots, wha hae wi' Wallace bled,  
Scots, wham Bruce has aften led,  
Welcome to your gory bed,  
Or to victorie.

Now's the day, and now's the hour,  
See the front o' battle lour!  
See approach proud Edward's power—  
Chains and slaverie!

<sup>2</sup> i.e. Robert the Steward. He was High Steward of Scotland.

(Robert II, 1371-90), the first of the ill-fated House of Stuart, <sup>The House of Stuart</sup> which ruled Scotland for three hundred years.

The history of Scotland for the rest of the medieval period is a tale of intrigue and strife, for the turbulent nobles often attacked the Stuart kings, and, indeed, murdered one of them (James I). On the Border, warfare never ceased, and every <sup>Border warfare</sup> house on both sides was fortified. Burning farms and churches, ruined crops, cattle slaughtered or driven off—such were the common happenings in this region. Of all this nothing remains but the memory and the legends enshrined in the Border Ballads.

### 5. *Edward II*

Edward II was a striking contrast to his father. The fierce <sup>Edward II 1307-27</sup> old soldier—the Conqueror of Wales and the ‘Hammer of the Scots’—was succeeded by a young man who had little taste for politics and none for war. Physically, Edward II was one of the finest of his race. Tall and strong, and a fine swimmer, he had his own ideas of physical exercise, and shocked the nobility by taking no interest in their favourite amusement of the tournament. He was fond of acting and games, and scandalized the Court by his partiality for such plebeian occupations as hedging and ditching, and working in a blacksmith’s forge.

But Edward II’s worst fault in the eyes of the nobles was the favour he showed to his boyhood’s friend, Peter of Gaveston, <sup>Piers Gaveston</sup> whom his father had exiled. He recalled Gaveston, made him his chief counsellor, and gave him the title of Earl of Cornwall. The barons resented the advancement of this upstart favourite, whose frivolous behaviour infuriated them—especially as he had a malicious tongue and gave them all nicknames. They demanded that he should be rebanished (1310). Edward consented for the moment, and then revoked the banishment. The lords replied by taking up arms, and Gaveston was obliged to take refuge in Scarborough Castle. There he surrendered to his enemies on receiving the promise that his life would be spared. He was handed over to the care of the Earl of Pembroke. But in Oxfordshire he was seized by Guy de Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick, whom he had called the Black Dog of Arden.

· The Black Dog now showed that he could bite. Gaveston was brought before an informal—and quite illegal—tribunal in the Great Hall of Warwick Castle; he was condemned to death, and hurried to execution on Blacklow Hill, outside Warwick.

His death  
1312

The Lords  
Ordainers  
1311-22

Edward never forgave the murderers of Gaveston, who now became the rulers of England. The year before Gaveston's death a commission of reform, calling themselves Lords Ordainers, had drawn up a set of ordinances or rules to guide the king in the government of the country. Besides the usual formula that the Great Charter should be observed, the Ordinances laid down that the king could not leave the country or go to war, or appoint his ministers, without the consent of the barons in Parliament.

Thomas of  
Lancaster

The leader of the victorious barons was the king's cousin, Thomas, Earl of Lancaster, Leicester, and Derby, who had recently succeeded also to the earldoms of Lincoln and Salisbury on the death of his father-in-law. Earl Thomas's great estates, together with his royal blood—he was the son of Edmund, 'King of Sicily', Edward I's brother—marked him out for leadership. But he was devoid of all statesmanlike qualities. He was sulky and ill-tempered, and his idea of statecraft was to oppose the king's power and uphold the authority of the baronage at all costs.

Execution  
of Lancaster  
1322

Meanwhile Edward's prestige suffered a severe blow by the rout of his army at Bannockburn (1314), which secured the independence of Scotland. Having lost Scotland, Edward showed little taste or capacity for governing England in conjunction with a baronial council. His distrust of his cousin, Lancaster, grew more marked. At last he took two new favourites into his confidence—the Despencers, father and son—who supported him in his efforts to get rid of Lancaster. The Lancastrian party took up arms again, but were defeated at Boroughbridge in a campaign in Yorkshire, and Thomas of Lancaster was beheaded outside his own castle of Pontefract (1322). The other baronial leaders were hanged.

A Parliament held at York (1322) registered the triumph of the king. The Ordinances were revoked, and the king made free from control by baronial committees. But at the same time an important constitutional principle was asserted—that

affairs of State should be treated as 'heretofore accustomed', in Parliament 'by the assent of the prelates, earls, and barons and the Commonalty of the realm'.

The rule of the king and the Despensers lasted five years: then it was overthrown by a blow from an unexpected quarter. Edward's queen, Isabella, was sent to negotiate a treaty with her brother, the King of France. But, having arrived on the Continent, she refused to come back. Instead she went to Flanders where, assisted by her lover, Lord Mortimer, she began to intrigue against her husband. Mortimer and Isabella landed in England (1326), and were joined by a large section of the baronage. The Despensers were caught and hanged. Edward fled to Devonshire, took ship for Lundy Island, but was driven ashore on to the Welsh coast and there captured.

From Wales Edward II was brought to Kenilworth Castle, where the deep dungeon in which the captive king was imprisoned can still be seen. There a deputation of lords waited on the unhappy prisoner and besought him to resign his crown in favour of his young son (aged 13). He consented to do so, and Parliament was summoned to approve the change. Isabella and Mortimer ruled in the name of the young Edward III, while Edward II was taken from Kenilworth to Berkeley Castle in Gloucestershire, where he was soon afterwards murdered (1327).

Treachery and murder stain the pages of English annals during Edward II's reign and set up an ominous precedent for future ages. The murder or execution of the principal actors in the drama—Gaveston, Thomas of Lancaster, the Despensers, the king, and (in the next reign) his supplanter Mortimer—showed political strife in its grimmest colours, and indeed anticipated the equally murderous struggles of the Wars of the Roses. But throughout this tale of strife and bloodshed there is one point worth stressing. Though neither side took any account of national interests, yet whichever side was victorious at the moment appealed to Parliament to confirm its triumph. Parliament passed the Ordinances of 1311, and Parliament repealed the same Ordinances in 1322; Parliament consented to the deposition of Edward II and acclaimed the accession of Edward III. It may be said that all Parliament

had to do in all these instances was to recognize the *fait accompli*; but nevertheless such recognition was important, and the influence of Parliament steadily increased. Thus the instrument which was to shape England's future grew in strength amidst the struggles of rival factions.



The growth of Parliament. The King and his Court (*Curia Regis*), the Barons on his right, churchmen and clerks on his left. An illustration in the manuscript of a thirteenth-century law-book.

## IX

### THE ZENITH OF MEDIEVAL CIVILIZATION

#### 1. *The Church in the Middle Ages*

THE twelfth and thirteenth centuries may be taken as the zenith of the Middle Ages, though of course the age cannot be defined within exact dates. It was in these centuries that medieval civilization bore its finest fruits; that the Church reached the height of its influence; that in most important countries of Europe the teaching of the Catholic (i.e. universal) Church<sup>1</sup> was accepted with unhesitating faith; and its system endured, without serious challenge, for a thousand years—from Gregory the Great to the Reformation.

It would be difficult to over-estimate the influence of the Church exercised over men's minds in those Ages. This influence made itself felt, first and foremost, in the education of the young; in the cure of souls, and through the church services in the Latin language throughout the Christendom. The Pope at Rome was the spiritual ruler acknowledged by all. The Church held the monopoly both of learning and teaching; few laymen could read or write. And for the Church a career was freely open to the talented, high or low born: the great Hildebrand himself came of humble birth, and Longchamp, Bishop of Ely and Chancellor to King Henry II, was said to be the son of a runaway French serf. The Church had its own Courts, to deal not only with erring laymen but with cases (e.g. the marriage law) which affected the daily lives and the morals of the people.

The Church claimed to be super-national or universal, whereas the State was a national institution; and conflicts arose between Church and State. In the thirteenth century and Emperor, conflict often led to war. The struggle continued for two centuries (1073-1250)—from the time of Gregory VII to the time of Innocent IV. In English history, it was the struggle between King and Pope.

<sup>1</sup> The Greek or Orthodox Church was established in the East by the Byzantine Empire.

more or less friendly controversy between Gregory VII and William I, and the more serious controversies between Anselm and Henry I, Becket and Henry II, Innocent III and John. Under Innocent III, the strongest Pope of the Middle Ages, it seemed as if Gregory's ideal was about to be realized; for Innocent hoped that even the Emperor would become—like John of England—his obedient servant. But Innocent III died (1216) the year after his young pupil, Frederick II, became Emperor. He was thus spared a great disillusionment, for Frederick proved to be one of the worst enemies the Papacy had ever known. Gregory IX, who excommunicated him several times, compared him to the Beast in the Book of Revelation. Frederick II was the last of the great medieval Emperors, and to his contemporaries he was known as *stupor mundi*, the 'wonder of the world'. After his time the internal divisions of Germany weakened the Empire beyond recovery; and with him disappeared for ever the hope of making the German Kaisers<sup>2</sup> the successors of the Caesars of old Rome.

The Crusades were another expression of the Papal hopes of uniting Christendom—hopes that were doomed to disappointment. Even the greatest of Popes, Innocent III, was unable at the height of his power to inspire the knights of Christian Europe with the zeal of the earlier Crusaders. St. Louis of France was the hero of later Crusades (1248 and 1270). Though he achieved no lasting result, he fought in Egypt and in Tunis, where he died of the plague. This saintly king, the meekest and most heroic of medieval knights, was the last of the Crusaders. Soon afterwards the Moslems swooped down upon Acre and took it (1291), and with its fall disappeared the last vestige of Christian rule in the Holy Land. Nor was Jerusalem again in Christian hands till in the Great War it fell to the British army under General Allenby (1917).

The term 'Crusade' came to be applied to all kinds of

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter IV, Sect. 3 (William I), and Sect. 4 (Henry I); Chapter VI, Sect. 2 (Henry II), and Chapter VII, Sect. 1 (John).

<sup>2</sup> German, *Kaiser* (and Russian, *Czar*), from the Latin, *Caesar*; English, *Emperor*, from the Latin, *Imperator*. It was left till the last quarter of the nineteenth century, to Bismarck, to make Germany itself at last a united nation.



expeditions in which the Popes were concerned—war against heathen lands; against John of England before he submitted to the Holy See, and against the Emperor Frederick II; and the war against the Albigensian heretics in the south of France, which was conducted with relentless fury. The Church would not tolerate the existence of heresy, and the Court of the Holy Inquisition had been set up to root it out. Crusade  
against  
Heresy

If persecution is the dark side of the later medieval picture, the life of St. Francis of Assisi (1182-1226), on the other hand, shows the medieval Church at its brightest and best. The Friars<sup>1</sup> brought the Church into closer touch with the common people than it had been for centuries. They were largely engaged in teaching, and they played an important part in the early history of the Universities which arose in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries—Bologna, Paris, Oxford, and Cambridge. The Universities remain one of the most important legacies of the Middle Ages to modern times. Medieval  
Institutions

The Gothic cathedrals, churches, and abbeys, which covered Christendom, were built in the later medieval age. It was in the thirteenth century that two of the noblest buildings in England were raised, Westminster Abbey and Salisbury Cathedral. Medieval buildings, one of the chief glories of the Ages of Faith, remain to-day the visible witnesses of their ideals.

Lastly, the Guilds of the boroughs, in common with all medieval institutions, had a strong religious side. Like the humble township or manor from which it originated, the borough in England developed under the control of its lord (king, baron, bishop, or abbot), and its development foreshadowed the time when the trader would become a more important person than the armed knight. The guild, the university, the monastery, knighthood—binding townsman to townsman, student to student, monk to monk, knight to knight—all are examples of the fraternities or corporate bodies of the Middle Ages. And the common link of all was the Church.

## 2. *Schools and Universities*

Education in medieval times was entirely dependent on the Church. The monks kept schools for the training of their Schools

<sup>1</sup> See next two sections.

own novices, while the secular clergy instructed boys, not intended for the cloister, in schools attached to cathedrals and to collegiate churches (i.e. churches served by colleges of clergy).<sup>1</sup> After the Conquest, many more schools were founded, especially by the bounty of the Guilds (see Sect. 4 of this chapter). From the fact that Latin grammar was the principal subject of instruction, many of the medieval schools became known as Grammar Schools. Besides grammar, boys were taught rhetoric (the art of effective speaking) and logic (the science of reasoning); the three subjects formed what was called the Trivium. A more advanced course of study, called the Quadrivium, included arithmetic, geometry, music, and astronomy. The main teaching in medieval schools consisted in a thorough grounding in Latin grammar, as a preparation for further study, for all the books available were written in Latin, and written communication between educated men was generally carried on in this language. This system had one great advantage—there were no international barriers of language, as there are at the present day; and the scholar was as much at home in Paris or Rome as he was in York or Winchester.

It was during the twelfth century that the earliest universities were founded. A university was not, in its early days, very different from an ordinary school. It arose in the usual way around some church or cathedral, its teachers being clergy, and its pupils boys of any age from twelve to twenty. The term 'university' (i.e., a corporation or guild) was first used in connexion with schools which drew their students from all parts, and not just from one particular locality. Among the earliest of such universities were Paris, famous for its schools of philosophy and theology, Bologna, for the teaching of law, and Salerno, for medicine. A university was simply a learned

<sup>1</sup> The oldest school in England is probably that founded by St. Augustine himself and attached to the Cathedral at Canterbury; other early foundations were those at Rochester, St. Paul's (London), and York. Sherborne School was probably founded by St. Aldhelm, Bishop of Sherborne (c. 705). All the Saxon cathedrals—e.g. Hereford, Worcester, Winchester—had schools attached to them. Similarly at places—e.g. Shrewsbury and Warwick—where there were collegiate churches, there were also schools.

guild; it was an association of those engaged in teaching or learning. Like the trade guilds, the universities bound their members by a set of rules, afterwards known as the Statutes of the University.

The University of Oxford was founded during the Becket controversy. The King of France favoured Becket, and Henry II issued an order (1167) that all English scholars studying in France should return home. This order, it is believed, was followed by a sudden migration of English-speaking scholars from Paris to Oxford, and it was from this nucleus that the university began. Cambridge was founded in a similar way by a migration (1209) of scholars from Oxford.<sup>1</sup>

Oxford and  
Cambridge

Oxford, like Paris, developed a system of separate colleges within the university. At first it was customary for students to live together in buildings called halls. Many Oxford and Cambridge colleges have developed from halls—for example, University College, Oxford, began as Great University Hall (about 1250). But Walter de Merton, Chancellor of England, was the first founder of a real college, with statutes enjoining collegiate discipline. Merton College, Oxford (founded c. 1264), was built on the now familiar pattern of a quadrangle, since copied by nearly all colleges and many schools.<sup>2</sup>

Colleges

Life in a medieval university was distinctly unruly, since it was long before the authorities made disciplinary rules for the students. The boys and young men who went up to Oxford or Cambridge lived in rough style, worked, played, and fought, got into difficulties with tradesmen, and went home in the Long Vacation to help gather in the harvest. The traditional peace of Oxford was far to seek in a thirteenth-century university.

<sup>1</sup> This was during the troubles of John's reign. There was a riot at Oxford in which a townsman was killed by a clerk, and the townsmen retaliated by putting two or three clerks to death. John, who was under sentence of excommunication at the time, lifted no finger to protect the scholars, many of whom migrated in alarm to Cambridge.

<sup>2</sup> About the same time Balliol College was founded (c. 1263) by Sir John de Balliol, father of the future King of Scots. Peterhouse, Cambridge, the first college in the sister university, was founded in 1284; many other colleges at both universities date from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. New College, Oxford (1379), the largest of the medieval Oxford colleges, was designed by William of Wykeham, who at the same time founded his famous school at Winchester.

University  
life

'In the stead of long fronts of venerable colleges, of stately walks beneath immemorial elms, history plunges us into the mean and filthy lanes of a medieval town. Thousands of boys, huddled in bare lodging houses, clustered round teachers as poor as themselves, drinking, quarrelling, dicing, begging at the corners of the streets' (Green). The students' life was hard. Their bedroom and study walls were bare. In the halls, a hole in the roof let out the smoke—or some of it—from the brazier.

Teaching was given, then as now, by means of lectures by the Masters of Arts to the students. The fundamental point of the teaching was the infallibility of Aristotle—*Absurdum est dicere Aristotelem errasse*—and his philosophy was interwoven with the teaching of the Christian Fathers by the subtle arguments of the Dominican Friars, especially the famous St. Thomas Aquinas (1226–74), who taught successively at Paris, Rome, and Bologna.

### 3. *The Friars*

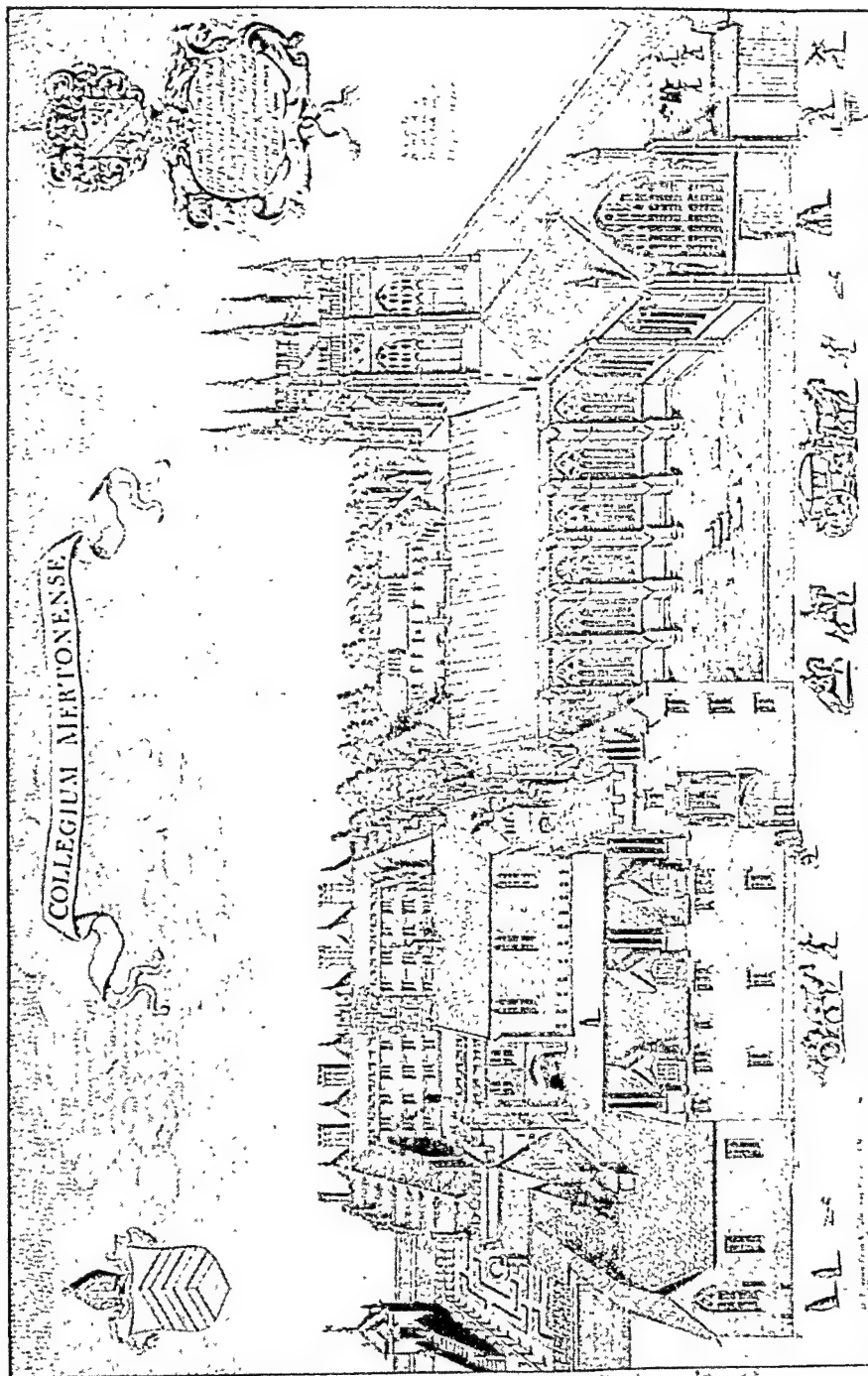
The Domi-  
nicans, 1216

The coming of the Friars<sup>1</sup> caused a tremendous stir in the everyday life of the thirteenth century. The first Order of Friars was founded (1216) by St. Dominic, for the purpose of preaching against heresy in the south of France. From the first the Dominicans put study in the forefront of their training, and they made a great impression on the growing universities.

St. Francis  
of Assisi

The Franciscan Friars were called after their founder, St. Francis of Assisi, the most lovable figure in the whole Christian calendar. He was the son of a well-to-do Italian merchant, and, until he was twenty-one, he devoted himself to a life of pleasure. Then, during an illness, he was troubled by strange dreams. 'Sell all that thou hast and distribute unto the poor'—so Christ had spoken to the rich young man of the Gospel story; so, also, Francis believed, the voice of Christ spoke to him. He cast aside his rich clothes, appeared in rags, joined a troop of beggars, and attended the victims of leprosy in their dreadful hospital. Soon, as the fame of his piety spread, he was joined by disciples, who, like him, began to preach and work among the poorest of the people. St. Francis, as he said, loved the Lady Poverty; he loved his fellow men, and all God's

<sup>1</sup> i.e. *Fratres*, brothers.



#### THE FOUNDING OF THE UNIVERSITIES

A seventeenth-century engraving of the buildings of Merton College, Oxford. The chapel was built at the end of the thirteenth century and the quadrangle beyond it (to the South) soon afterwards, but the other buildings later, as the College grew.

creatures, down to the swallows that interrupted his sermon by their chattering. He discarded all those things which most people spend their lives in seeking; and his followers were forbidden to own property of any kind. They begged their way from place to place—hence their name of mendicant or begging Friars. Before St. Francis was called away by his 'Sister Death', he had started a spiritual revolution in the world. Men had not lived as St. Francis lived since Christ and His disciples preached in Galilee.

The Dominicans in England 1221 The Dominicans were the first of the Friars to arrive in England. They came in the train of Peter des Roches, Bishop of Winchester, the favourite of Henry III. Their first house was built at Oxford (1221); by the end of the century they possessed nearly fifty houses in England and Wales. The Dominicans imitated the Franciscans in renouncing all personal property. They accepted gifts of houses, however, though these at first were the barest shelters. 'I did not enter into religion to build walls' was the reply of one English Friar to the suggestion of a larger and more comfortable house.

The Franciscans in England 1224 The first Franciscan mission to England landed three years later at Dover (1224); three of its nine members were Englishmen. Their first three settlements were at Canterbury, London, and Oxford. It was in the towns that the Friars did their greatest work. They took up their abode 'outside the city walls in a filthy swamp at Norwich, through which the drainage of the city sluggishly trickled into the river; . . . in a mere barn-like structure with walls of mud at Shrewsbury; in the "Stinking Alley" of London'.<sup>1</sup> 'Three things have chiefly exalted our Order', said a Franciscan, 'bare feet, mean garments, and the refusal of money.' To these should be added the power of their preaching. Like the early Methodists and the present Salvation Army, the Friars went out into the streets to preach. Their sermons, delivered in the rough, direct speech of the common people, were full of homely illustrations from common life.

Work in the towns The followers of St. Dominic were from the first a learned Order. But St. Francis had frowned on study, as one of the snares of the world; in this respect, however, none but his earliest disciples followed his example. Robert Grosseteste,

<sup>1</sup> Jessopp, *Coming of the Friars*.

afterwards Bishop of Lincoln and the friend of de Montfort, accepted the post of lecturer to the Franciscans of Oxford (c. 1230). Grosseteste was one of the greatest scholars of his time. 'Unless the brethren devoted themselves to study,' he told the Friars, 'the same fate would befall us as had befallen the other religious, whom we see, alas, walking in the darkness of ignorance.' Grosseteste was the founder of a new school of Franciscan learning: the scholars whom he influenced taught not only in England, but in the schools of France, Germany, and Italy. These scholars studied languages, mathematics, and physics, as well as theology.

Franciscan  
learning

The greatest exponent of this school was Friar Roger Bacon (1214-94). His bold challenge to accepted authority, and his insistence on the value of experiment have earned Friar Bacon the title of the Father of Modern Science. He himself is said to have invented spectacles and a primitive telescope; he also knew something of the properties of gunpowder. That he was a man of exceptional imagination may be judged from his remarkable prophecies: 'Cars may be so made that they may be moved without an animal. Flying machines are possible, so that a man may sit in the middle turning some device by which artificial wings may beat the air in the manner of a flying bird,' and he also foretold that ships would be invented which would move without oars or sails.

Roger  
Bacon

The spirit of inquiry which Bishop Grosseteste and Friar Bacon aroused bore fruit in later times, when the mind of Europe awakened in the dawn of the Renaissance.<sup>1</sup>

#### 4. *The Medieval Builder*

The cathedrals of Europe built in the Middle Ages are undoubtedly among the greatest masterpieces of human achievement. The medieval builder loved his work and was a master of it; he built as though his work would last for ever.

The Norman style<sup>2</sup> was introduced from the Continent, and was developed in the cathedrals and churches of England. It is, like Saxon, a form of Romanesque architecture, so called because it was a development of the Roman. Norman churches were characterized by the immense thickness of the walls, and

Roman-  
esque Ar-  
chitecture

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter XIII.

<sup>2</sup> See Chapter IV, note at end.

by the use of the massive round column and the round arch; the windows were constructed by making in the outside of the wall a narrow slit, which was widened as it went inwards. Norman ornament, in early work, followed somewhat stereotyped patterns, the best known being the chevron, the billet, and the beak-head. Later, ornamentation became more profuse, and grotesque carved heads are a feature of late Norman, as of all medieval, architecture.

Many of our English cathedrals have Norman naves,<sup>1</sup> while numbers of our parish churches still show some features of Norman work, as do some of our ruined abbeys and castles. Romsey Abbey Church (Hampshire), now the parish church, is perhaps the best preserved and the most beautiful Norman church in England. In Normandy, itself the original home of the Norman style,<sup>2</sup> we may notice the twin abbeys founded by William the Conqueror and his queen: the Abbaye aux Hommes and the Abbaye aux Dames, at Caen.

Towards the middle of the twelfth century, the Norman style of architecture gradually gave place to a new style, to which later ages have given the name of Gothic.<sup>3</sup> This new style first arose in the north of France, and there it reached its greatest heights of achievement in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. The wonderful cathedrals of Chartres, Rheims, Amiens, and Notre Dame of Paris were all built between 1140 and 1250.

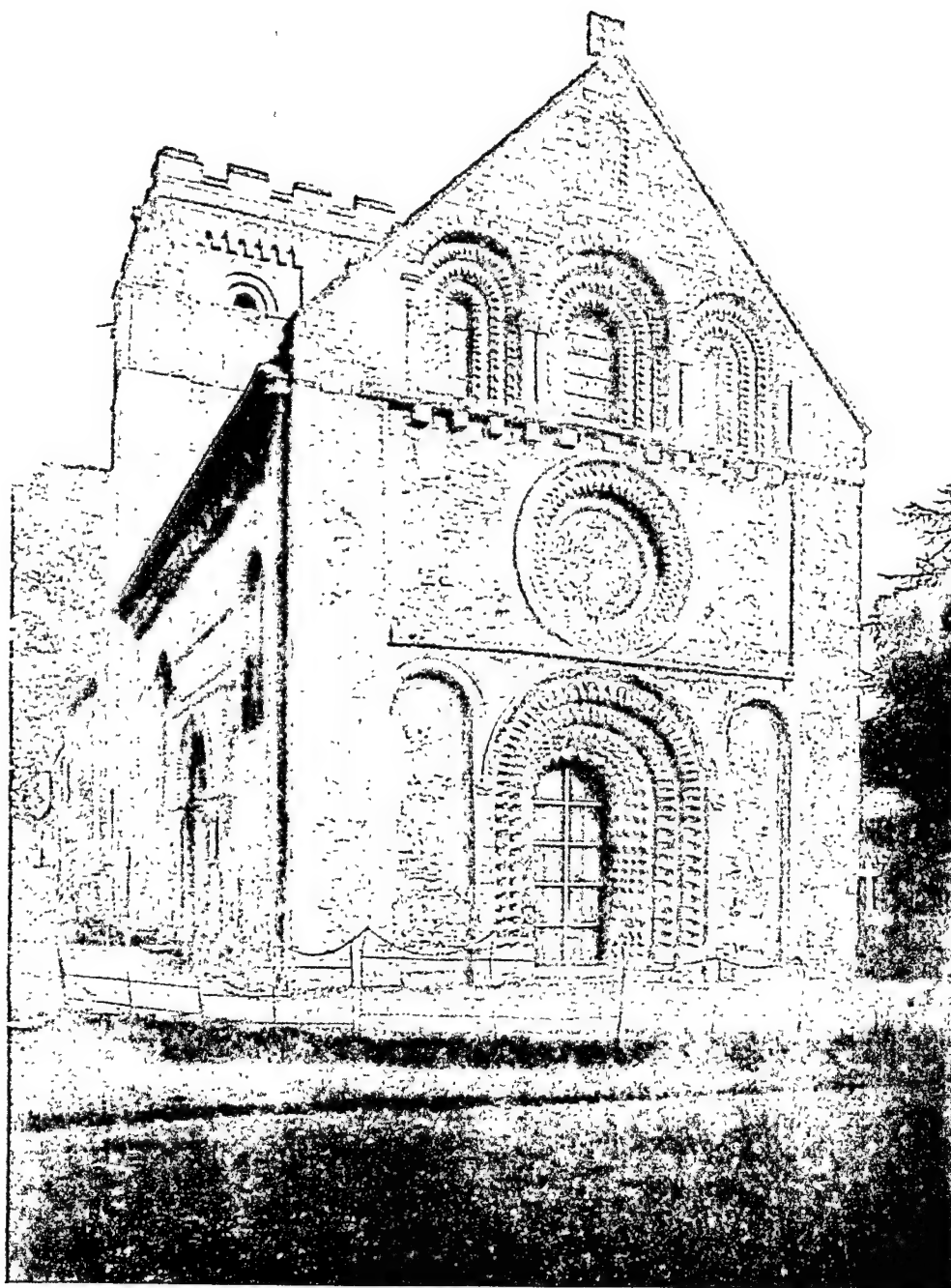
The typical Norman church, as we have seen, had thick walls and columns, round arches, and small windows: the whole effect was one of massiveness. The Gothic church, on the

<sup>1</sup> Chichester, Durham (the finest), Ely, Gloucester, Hereford, Norwich, Peterborough, Rochester, St. Albans, and Southwell Cathedrals, all have Norman naves. Tewkesbury Abbey Church and Exeter Cathedral have the best remaining Norman towers; while the graceful transepts at Winchester and the exquisite Chapel of St. Mary at Glastonbury Abbey show Norman work of a style less massive, but equally impressive. There is a magnificent Norman west front at Lincoln Cathedral.

<sup>2</sup> The "Norman style" includes the buildings of Henry II's reign, as well as those of the Norman kings.

<sup>3</sup> So called in derision by the architects of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries who preferred the Roman or Classical style. Gothic meant 'barbarian'—the Goths helped to destroy the Roman Empire.





#### NORMAN ARCHITECTURE

The west front of Iffley Church, Oxford, built early in the twelfth century, a very fine example of the Norman church. Types of Norman ornament can be seen in the photograph, including the chevron and the beak-head. (Compare illustrations on pp. 47 and 201)

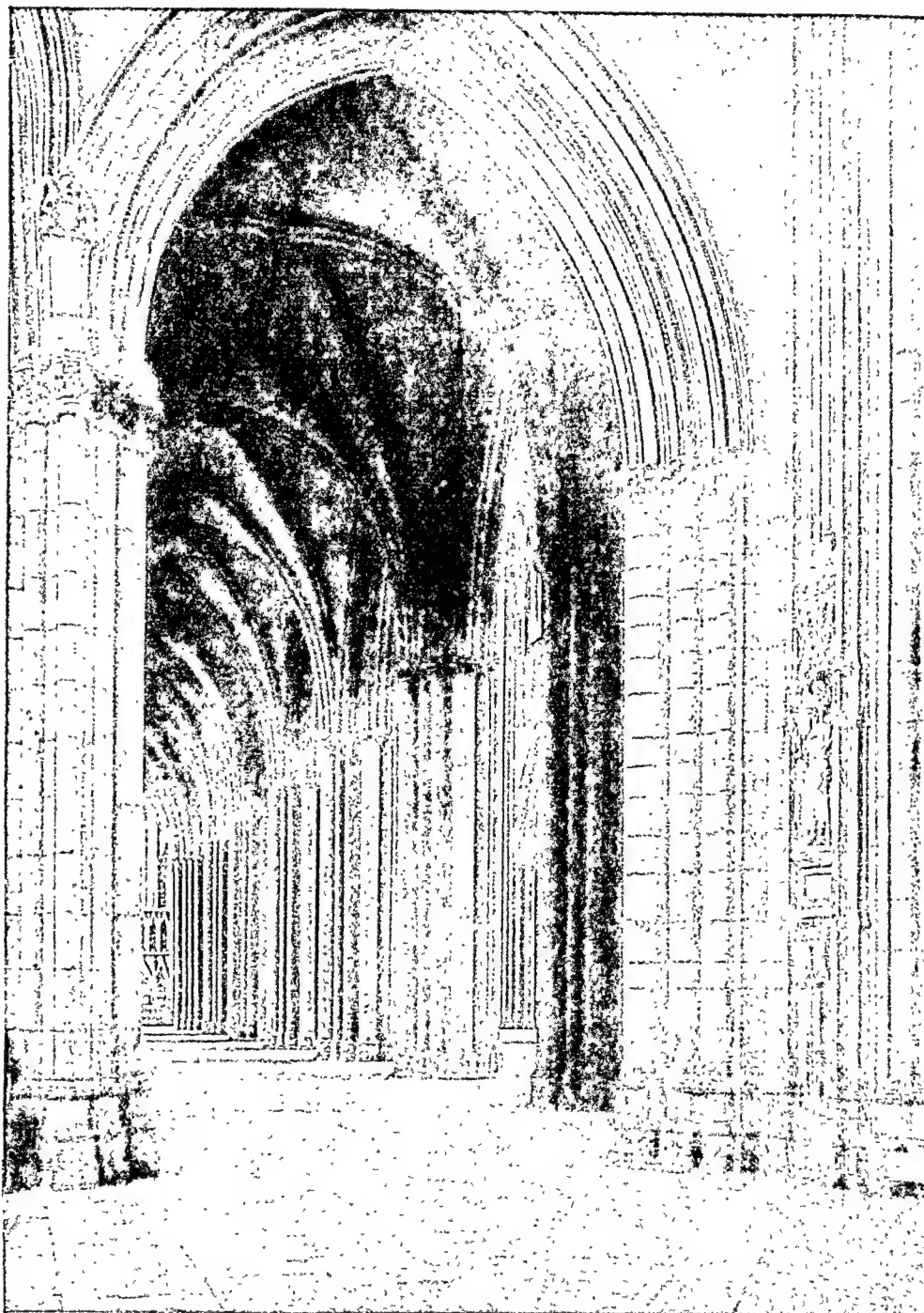
other hand, had pointed arches, larger windows, and thinner walls: the effect was one of airiness, lightness, and grace. How was the change brought about? The first transforming factor was the invention of 'ribbed' vaulting.<sup>1</sup> Ribs are simply skeleton arches, like the ribs of an umbrella; they are built first, and the space between them filled in afterwards. This greatly simplified the task of building a stone roof. It was also found that, for vaulting purposes, a pointed stone arch was preferable to a round one. By the end of the twelfth century the pointed arch, usually called Gothic, had taken the place of the round Norman arch.

The improvement in stone vaulting led to another important development, that of the use of the buttress. It was found that the thrusts from the roof were concentrated at the points from which the arches sprang. At these points, therefore, buttresses were built on the outside wall, to take the weight of the roof. Thick walls were thus done away with, and superseded by thinner ones with buttresses. Buttresses, however, could only be built on the ground against the outside walls, that is, against the walls of the aisles. The nave, having aisles on both sides, could not be strengthened in the same way. So the aisle buttresses were carried up above the aisle roof, and from each to the nave walls an arch was built which received the thrust of the vaulting and carried it to the ground. This is called a 'flying buttress'.

One effect of the invention of the buttress was an improvement in lighting. Since the thickness of the walls was no longer important, the walls themselves largely gave way to windows, which increased in size as the manufacture of glass improved. Stained glass was much used; it is more effective, however, in sunnier climates than England.

A Gothic church has been compared to a forest of stone. Any one who stands in a Gothic cathedral and notes the arches, springing upwards from their columns like branches from tree trunks, will see the force of this comparison. The effect was increased by what is called 'naturalistic' decoration. The ornamented mouldings in a Gothic building are

<sup>1</sup> First used by the Norman builders (e.g. at Durham Cathedral, 1095) but commoner later.



### GOTHIC ARCHITECTURE

York Minster. The pointed arches and ribbed pillars give an effect of soaring grace in strong contrast to the massive Saxon and Norman styles.

taken from nature. First leaves only, and then, later, acorns and fruits, were exquisitely carved in stone. The effect was very different from the geometrical decoration of Norman work.

The transition from Norman to Gothic was marked by the use of the pointed arch in the vault, while the rounded arch was still used in doorways. This transitional stage is best seen in England in Canterbury Cathedral, built (c. 1170) under the supervision of William of Sens, on the model of Sens Cathedral.<sup>1</sup> The full Gothic form came into general use at the end of the twelfth century.

It is usual to divide Gothic architecture in England into three 'styles' called Early English, Decorated, and Perpendicular. The Early English style should more properly be called Early Gothic, since it was more an adoption from France than a native growth. It was used in the building of the first Cistercian abbeys in Yorkshire, Rievaulx and Fountains (c. 1150), and in the rebuilding of Lincoln Cathedral (1185-1200). Most English cathedrals have some parts rebuilt in the Early English style, but its greatest glories are to be seen at Salisbury, Westminster Abbey, and Wells.

Salisbury Cathedral (1220-58, in Henry III's reign) is unlike all other English Gothic cathedrals in that it was all built in one style. It is one of the most perfect buildings in England, set in a typically English scene—the subject of one of Constable's famous pictures.<sup>2</sup> The rebuilding of Westminster Abbey in the new Early English style was inspired by King Henry III, who pulled down the Confessor's abbey. The king was an architectural enthusiast, and he planned to make his abbey one of the great glories of England. An inscription in the floor reads: 'As the Rose is to other flowers, so this House is among buildings.' The use of flying buttresses, adapted from the cathedrals at Amiens and Rheims, is a great feature of Henry III's abbey. Wells Cathedral has a glorious Early English western

<sup>1</sup> The actual stone used to build Canterbury Cathedral was brought from Caen in Normandy.

<sup>2</sup> W. H. Hudson speaks in *A Shepherd's Life* of his impressions—his 'shock of pleased wonder at the sight of that immense interior'—on first entering Salisbury Cathedral as a boy.

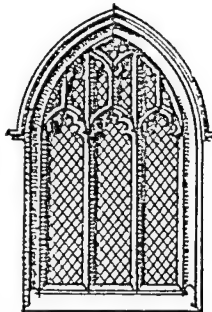
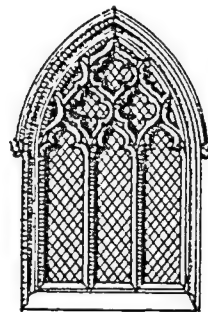
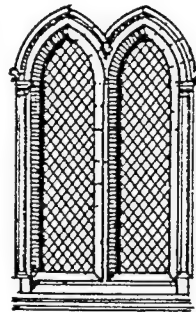
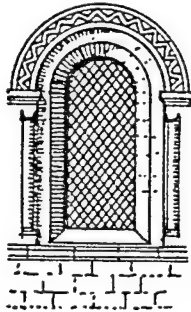
## TYPICAL DETAILS OF ENGLISH MEDIEVAL ARCHITECTURE

NORMAN

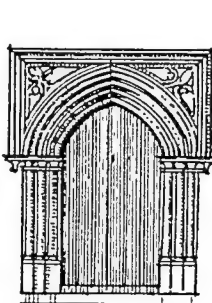
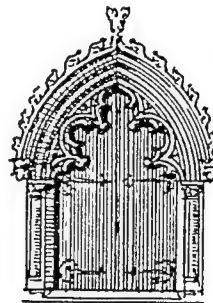
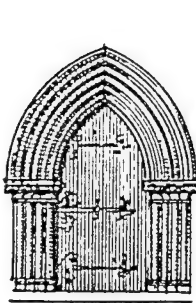
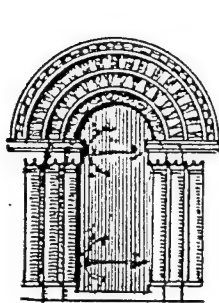
EARLY ENGLISH

DECORATED

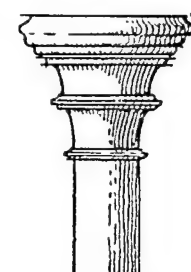
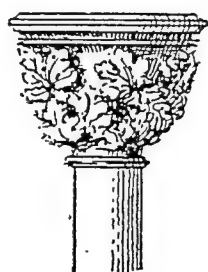
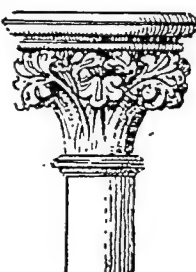
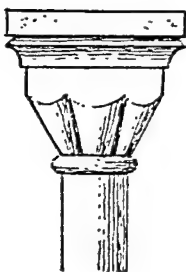
PERPENDICULAR



WINDOWS



DOORWAYS



CAPITALS

Yarmouth, Portsmouth, and the Cinque Ports of the south coast similarly owed their rise to good harbours, suitable either for fishing or trading vessels. Again, just as a good harbour was an asset to a coast town, so a good position on a river made a town a centre of inland trade. Examples of such river-towns are Gloucester, where the first bridge spans the Severn; Oxford, where cattle could be driven over the river with safety; and Stratford, at the ford over the Avon.

The presence of a great monastery was another reason for the growth of a town, and so, after the Conquest, was that of a castle. The frequent visitors whom the abbot or lord received often brought large retinues of soldiers and servants in their train, and so encouraged trade in the neighbouring town. Bury St. Edmunds, St. Albans, and Abingdon are examples of towns that grew round monasteries; Warwick, Arundel, and Lancaster of those that grew round castles.

There are, of course, many English towns where we can see a combination of such favourable circumstances. Thus, Oxford, besides being a 'ford-town', boasted a Norman castle and two monasteries; Durham possessed the palatine bishop's castle and a cathedral; Chepstow was a seaport as well as the seat of a Marcher lord. London, the leading city of England since Roman times, has advantages of land and sea communication unrivalled by any other English town. The famous bridge made the city the meeting place for roads from north, south, and west; while eastward lies the Thames estuary, the harbour for the ships of western Europe.

While most of our towns have thus grown out of villages from natural causes, there is an important group originating in the Danish wars of Alfred and his successors. The Danes themselves were great town-builders; to them may be traced the development of the famous five boroughs of the eastern midlands—Derby, Nottingham, Lincoln,<sup>1</sup> Leicester, and Stamford. Norwich, for many centuries the capital of eastern England as Bristol was of the west, grew from a Norse settlement (*= wich*); and the navigable river Yare made it easy of access

<sup>1</sup> Lincoln was a Roman town. It was important as early as the seventh century, as is clear from Bede's account of the conversion of Blaecca by Paulinus.

to Norse traders. While the Danish invaders built and settled towns, Alfred and his son and daughter, Edward and the Lady Ethelfleda, built and fortified other places to resist them. The names of some are mentioned in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*;<sup>1</sup> the most important were Bridgnorth, Tamworth, Warwick, Towcester, Buckingham, and Maldon. These burhs or boroughs were originally enclosed places surrounded by wooden fortifications. The name 'borough', thus originally applied to a place of defence, came in time to be applied to all places which had grown beyond the dignity of a mere village, and which could claim, as we shall see, important privileges of their own. Nearly a hundred boroughs are mentioned in Domesday Book: London, Bristol, Norwich, Winchester, Lincoln, and York were the largest, but none of these, except London, had a population of more than seven or eight thousand people.

In the earliest stages of its growth a town was indistinguishable from a village or manor, and the townsmen were burdened with all the obligations of the villein or ordinary serf. As the trade of a town grew, the townsmen often tried to buy themselves free from feudal burdens. By the time of the Norman Conquest most townsmen had already bought their freedom from the main obligation of serfdom—three days' work a week on the lord's land. Further, they had either bought, or had acquired by custom, their personal freedom; they were free to come and go as they pleased and to conduct their own business. Any serf who escaped from his lord's service and remained in a town for a year and a day was considered a free man.

There were, however, many burdensome duties, relics of the servile past, which many townsmen had to endure, in some cases, for many centuries. At Egremont, as late as the thirteenth century, the lord could still demand that 'the burgesses with ploughs shall plough for me one day every year'; and at Manchester some feudal services were owed to the lord right up to the nineteenth century.

The progress of towns towards freedom from feudal control depended largely on who was their lord. Most English towns, fortunately for them, were on the royal demesne—that is to say, their lord was the king, who was a comparatively easy

<sup>1</sup> *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, 910-24.



master; his interests were wide and free from local jealousy. The needs of the royal exchequer, too, especially in time of war, often urged the king to forgo his feudal rights in return for a sum of money. Many towns received charters of freedom under Henry II and Richard I; still more under John, who has been called the great charter-monger. York, Norwich, Winchester, Southampton, and Gloucester are all examples of towns which early received royal charters.

The development of towns not on the royal demesne was less rapid, since a local baron was often jealous of the progress of the townspeople. But a harsh lord, however severely he bore on the townsmen, was bound to die some day, and he might be succeeded by a spendthrift, eager to sell his feudal rights. On the other hand, the corporation of the town, ceaselessly struggling for freedom, never died. Very different was the case of those towns unfortunate enough to lie on a monastic estate. There, one undying corporation, the Town, was matched by another, the Church. A prior or abbot was unwilling to sell the feudal rights which he had inherited from his predecessor; he regarded such rights as a sacred charge, to part with which would injure the Church. The contests between town and monastery, therefore, were long and bitter, and often accompanied by riots. Disorders were especially liable to break out during periods of national crisis, such as the breakdown of the central government. Thus, at the deposition of Edward II (1327), there was a great riot at Bury St. Edmunds. The townsmen of Bury broke into the monastery and carried off the abbot and monks to prison. They also 'mowed the meadows, felled the trees, and fished the ponds of the abbey, taking away the grass, trees, and fish'.

In early times towns were ruled, not by an officer of their own choice, but by a reeve, responsible like the manor reeve to the sheriff of the county, who represented the king. The reeve collected the taxes and was responsible for the defence of the town. It was one of the chief objects of municipal policy to get rid of the reeve, the sheriff, and 'all the king's men', and to obtain town officials in their places. This was achieved by buying from the king the right to 'farm'<sup>1</sup> the borough, which

<sup>1</sup> Farm, from medieval Latin, *firma*, rent.



meant to collect the taxes due to the Crown. Once this right was granted, the sheriff or 'other rough and powerful officer set over our town' could practically be excluded from its



The medieval town. A scene depicted in a fifteenth-century manuscript.  
Inside the gate is a money-changer's stall.

walls. A further step was the holding of the borough court, under borough magistrates, who could try cases which formerly went to the hundred court. London was granted (1131), in Henry I's reign, the privilege that 'the citizens shall not plead outside the walls of the city for any plea'.

The privileges which town charters secured were given to

Burgesses the 'burgesses' of the town, for it must be borne in mind that the inhabitants of a town were by no means all on an equal footing. Originally a burgess may have been a man who held a piece of land or a house (burgage) within the town. But, as towns grew, the number of burgesses did not necessarily increase, since the original burgage-holders were jealous of their privileges. They were certainly a minority of the citizens, and in their hands the government of the town was vested. It was they who elected the chief officers of the town, the mayor and his assistant councillors, usually called aldermen.<sup>1</sup> London  
 Mayors elected its own mayor about 1191, King's Lynn in 1204, Bristol in 1217. In Coventry, on the other hand, where the prior of the monastery clung to his feudal rights, the city did not elect its own mayor till 1348.<sup>2</sup>

The com-  
 munal  
 spirit  
 English towns in the Middle Ages never attained the wealth and independence of those of Italy, Flanders, or Germany; the growing political unity of England prevented them from becoming actually independent communities. But their local self-government was nevertheless real. A town became a commune, a community of people living together under their own elected officers; hence the people in the town—together with the knights of that other local community, the shire—formed the 'commons', and their representatives at Westminster the House of 'Commons'. It was in the towns and in the shires that the Commons learnt the lesson of self-government.

The burgesses took great pride in the public buildings of their borough, on which were expended all the skill and love of beautiful form which characterized the Middle Ages at their best. Of the many churches and guild-halls which were built in medieval towns, only a few are left. Norwich once had over fifty churches; even a small place like Lewes had eight. Those churches which remain tell of a splendour of architecture which has passed away. They show that the medieval builder had a sense of beauty which the makers of later industrial England were too busy to consider or to understand. And it is doubtful whether the medieval trader would have been permitted by his fellows to ruin the appearance of his native place by putting

<sup>1</sup> 'Mayor' is a Norman-French word; 'Alderman', Anglo-Saxon.

<sup>2</sup> Dormer Harris, *Coventry*.

up ugly buildings for quick profit—as is happening all over England to-day.

But we must beware of exaggerating the picturesque side of medieval town life. The conditions under which people lived were in many respects horrible. Houses, except those of the wealthy, were built of wood and thatch, easily liable to catch fire, and were crowded together in dirty, narrow streets. Sanitation was unknown. Noise, which we are so apt to consider a modern invention, was certainly not absent in a city swarming with street vendors, vagabonds, outlaws, and ruffians of all sorts—and without police. But the bright colours of everyday costume—the blues and reds and greens worn by men and women alike—certainly added a touch of gaiety to the scene, as the merchant or beggar pursued his way along the 'merry, noisy, dirty, bright-coloured, stinking Eastcheap' of medieval London.

Dark side of  
town life

The darkest side of the picture was the terrible prevalence of misery and disease. Fever, plague, and skin diseases of all sorts were inevitable in towns where the majority of the inhabitants seldom washed, and were ignorant of the rules of hygiene. 'The sediment of the town population in the Middle Ages was a dense slough of stagnant misery, squalor, famine, loathsome disease and dull despair, such as the worst slums of London or Liverpool know nothing of.'

(ii) *The Guilds.*

Medieval townsmen were jealous of their neighbours, and people from other towns were 'foreigners'<sup>2</sup> to be treated with suspicion. The walls shut out the 'foreign' trader, who was not admitted within the town gates except on payment of a toll. The trade of a town was controlled in most places by a body known as the Merchant Guild,<sup>3</sup> which became common in England after the Norman Conquest. The earliest record we have of a guild is of that at Burford (Oxon.), 1087-1107.

<sup>1</sup> Jessopp, *Coming of the Friars*.

<sup>2</sup> 'Foreigner', from Latin *foris*, out of doors or bounds.

<sup>3</sup> Guild, i.e. fraternity, derived from the Old English verb 'gilden', to pay (compare Danegeld or money), because every guildsman paid his share towards the expenses of the guild. Their place of meeting was called the guild-hall.

The Merchant Guild

The Merchant Guild was originally composed of all the traders within the town; its members had the exclusive right of buying and selling within the borough. The Guild drew up a strict code of rules by which all members were bound. These rules had two chief objects: the exclusion of 'foreigners', and the regulation of prices for the benefit of the whole community. The modern notion that it is a tradesman's business to buy in the cheapest market and sell in the dearest was contrary to medieval notions of morality. There was a 'just price' for everything, and a just profit; more than that profit a man was not entitled—or allowed—to make. Every town, for example, had its Assize of Bread and Assize of Ale, by which the sale of these commodities was determined according to the price of wheat and barley. It was, however, possible for the trader to cheat his neighbours by giving short measure or bad quality; and for such offences a variety of punishments were devised to 'fit the crime'. Thus the vendor of sour or bad wine was compelled to drink some of the unpleasant beverage, and have the remainder poured over his head. Bakers who had sold false weight were drawn on hurdles through the streets, with the offending loaf hanging round their necks; and a pillory was placed in every market-place for the punishment of fraudulent tradesmen.

Assizes of Bread and Ale

The Craft Guild

The Merchant Guild thus controlled the trade of a town and regulated prices. There also grew up, during the thirteenth century, the Craft Guild, which was an association of all men engaged in one particular trade or craft—like the goldsmiths, the weavers, the fishmongers, the drapers, or the haberdashers—and its object was the complete regulation of that trade. The Craft Guild controlled the manner in which a man might enter a trade, and the manner in which he might afterwards practise it. A boy entered a craft in his early teens, and served a term of 'apprenticeship'—usually seven years. After serving his term and learning the trade, he became a 'journeyman'<sup>1</sup> or working craftsman. From this position he could, if he were skilful and industrious, rise to that of a 'master' craftsman—just as a university pupil could become a Master of Arts and be licensed to teach others.

<sup>1</sup> From French *journée*; therefore one who worked and was paid by the day.

The Guild regulations bound the craftsman by an elaborate system which fixed prices and wages, and determined the quality of his work. The Guild kept the ideal of sound craftsmanship always before its eyes. 'If the threads are deficient in the cloth or are too far apart,' said a rule of the Weavers of Bristol, 'that cloth, and the instrument on which it is worked, ought to be burnt.' A bad workman was held to bring discredit on his fellows. At Chester (1429) a shoemaker was fined £10 for selling shoes of inferior workmanship 'to the prejudice of the company of shoemakers'. But the rules of the Guild could not always overcome the desire of the manufacturer to cheat the public. In Coventry the clothmakers stretched out broadcloth 'to the high displeasure of God and deceit of the wearers'; and there were many other instances of dishonest work in spite of the rules of the Guilds. Guild regulations

Many Guilds were named after a patron saint, and all of them had a religious side. Chapels, for instance, for corporate acts of devotion, were often attached to the guild-hall. Closely connected with this side of their life were the religious plays, which the guildsmen annually performed for the entertainment of the town. These plays were often elaborate affairs, especially in the larger towns like York, Norwich, and Coventry, and in them we can trace the beginnings of the English drama of later times. At Norwich the crafts were divided into twelve groups, each of which produced an annual pageant. The Mercers and Drapers presented the Creation of the World; the Grocers, Paradise; the Smiths, David and Goliath, and so on. The plays were performed several times at various 'stations' in the town, and we see a relic of this custom in the Lord Mayor's Show in London. The players provided their own costumes and painted their faces with crude colours. Music, too, had its part in these popular pageants—the 'mynstralcye of harp and lute', the 'small pypis', and the 'organ pleyinge'. Mystery plays

Guilds also acted as friendly societies; they raised funds from among their members for the care of their aged and sick. Thus the Barber Surgeons of London ordained that if one of their brethren fell into trouble or poverty, 'if he have nothing of his own by which he may be able to live, and if it be not through his own folly, then shall he have each week from the Social services

Education common box tenpence halfpenny for his sustenance'. The education of the young also called for the guildsmen's care, and many grammar schools were founded by them. The Guild of Corpus Christi, Cambridge, founded the college which bears its name; and at the present day scholarships are still granted by the Drapers' and Goldsmiths' Guilds (or Companies) of London.

Thus the activities of the guilds were many and various. They served as religious fraternities, as popular play producers, as insurance societies against sickness and poverty. They have sometimes been compared with the modern trade union, but there are important differences; for example, the trade union is not concerned so much with the quality of the work as with the wages of the workman; and the craft guild of the thirteenth century included masters as well as men, since it was assumed that all were equally concerned with the welfare of the craft. Later, towards the close of the fourteenth century, we see the rise of journeymen's guilds—associations of workmen from which masters were excluded—and these were an indication that the interests of masters and men were beginning to diverge. The rise of a separate class of 'capitalist' masters, with interests different from those of their workmen, was a later development.



A fraudulent baker. On the left he is putting an undersized loaf into the oven, and on the right he is being drawn through the streets on a hurdle, with the offending loaf hanging round his neck (see p. 212).

## X

### EDWARD III AND THE FRENCH WAR

#### 1. *The Outbreak of the Hundred Years War*

EDWARD III was a boy of fourteen when he succeeded his <sup>Edward III</sup> deposed father (1327). For three years the government re- <sup>1327-77</sup> main-  
 ed in the hands of Lord Mortimer and Queen Isabella,<sup>1</sup> who had been responsible for the late king's overthrow. Like  
 all usurpers, Mortimer was in constant fear of treachery; he  
 quarrelled with the Earl of Lancaster, who had helped him to  
 power, and caused the Earl of Kent, the king's uncle, to be  
 executed (1330). The fate of Kent convinced Lancaster that  
 his own turn would come next; he therefore proposed to the <sup>Mortimer</sup>  
 young king that Mortimer should be overthrown. Edward was <sup>and Isabella</sup>  
 now a high-spirited youth of seventeen; he was already mar-  
 ried, and his eldest son, the future Black Prince, had just been  
 born. He was eager to shake off the degrading yoke of his  
 mother's rule, and decreed the arrest of her lover. Mortimer  
 was accordingly seized one night at Nottingham Castle, and,  
 in spite of the queen's entreaties—'Fair son, have pity on the <sup>Their fall</sup>  
 gentle Mortimer'—hurried to London. There he was tried for <sup>1330</sup>  
 high treason and executed. The queen spent the rest of her  
 days in retirement.

With the fall of Mortimer, Edward III's rule began. He was  
 a typical product of his age, an age when war was the sport  
 of kings. He excelled at the mock warfare of the tournament,  
 and was the hero of his own class, the gallant lords of England,  
 who loved a fight better than they loved gold. It was natural  
 that such a king should turn his attention to a revival of his  
 grandfather's schemes of conquest in the north. The opportu-  
 nity soon came: Edward Balliol seized the throne of Scotland  
 (1332)—three years after the death of Robert Bruce—and  
 plunged his country into civil war. Edward III decided to <sup>Scottish</sup>  
 support Balliol against the House of Bruce, and sent an army <sup>War</sup>  
 to the north, which routed the Scots at Halidon Hill (1333).

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 187.

This seemed like a repetition of the triumphs of Edward I. But Edward III found it as impossible to establish a Balliol on the throne, against the wishes of the Scottish people, as his grandfather had done. He spent a winter in Scotland (1334-5), but could not subdue the country. Balliol's 'reign' was one long-continued civil war. Meanwhile the outbreak of the Hundred Years War with France saved the independence of Scotland. When Edward finally departed, the Scots repudiated his vassal-king, and King David returned from France (1341), where he had taken refuge in the court of Philip of Valois.

There were many reasons for the outbreak of the great French war. The main cause was the presence of the English in Gascony. The lands which Edward III held in Gascony<sup>1</sup> were very much smaller than the vast inheritance of Eleanor of Aquitaine,<sup>2</sup> for the aggressions of the French kings since Philip Augustus had gradually reduced them in area. It was inevitable that this policy of aggression should continue; that peace could only be patched up for a time; and that the French kings should not rest until the English were driven into the sea. It was equally inevitable that the English should resist this process.

In 1328 a new French king succeeded to the throne. He was Philip VI (Philip VI), cousin of the last king, Charles IV. Edward, who was Charles IV's nephew,<sup>3</sup> afterwards claimed the throne. But Philip of Valois was chosen king for the simple reason that he was the nearest Frenchman in the line of succession. The French had no intention, in 1328 or later, of considering the right<sup>4</sup> of the King of England to succeed to the throne of France. Edward, indeed, did homage to Philip (1329) for Gascony, and for his other holding in France, Ponthieu (see map, p. 224), which he had inherited from his grandmother.

<sup>1</sup> Gascony is the south-west portion of Aquitaine (or what the French called Guienne). There was a very close connexion between England and south-western France (the wine-trade of Bordeaux, the ship-building of Bayonne)—and this is one of the keys to the Hundred Years War. Many English officials gained experience in governing Gascony.

<sup>2</sup> See Chapter VI.

<sup>3</sup> See Table opposite.

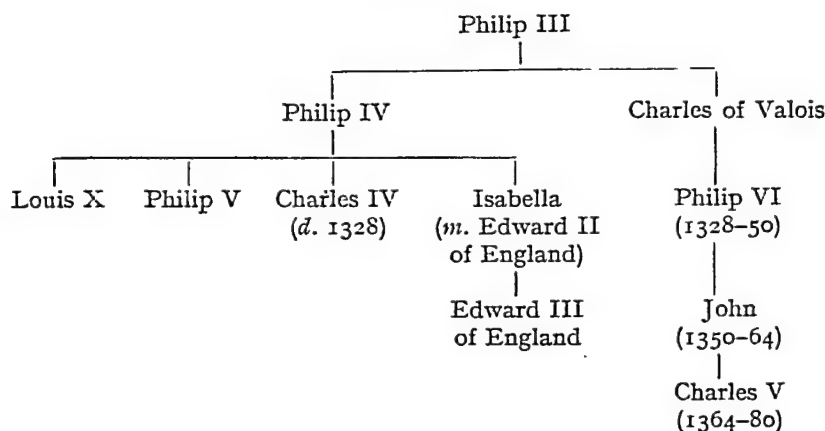
<sup>4</sup> The so-called Salic Law—that the French throne could not be inherited by or through a woman—was a later invention.



But the relations between Edward and Philip were strained from the first. Philip would not give up his designs on Gascony; he consistently helped the Scots in their resistance to Edward Balliol, and was harbouring the exiled king, David II. Edward, in fact, felt that he could never conquer Scotland until he had settled his accounts with France. Lastly, Philip was endeavouring to bring the rich province of Flanders under his control. The Count of Flanders, at his instigation, prohibited commerce between his country and England. Edward replied by stopping the export of English wool to Flanders (1337). Since the great Flemish cloth-manufacturing cities, Ghent, Bruges, and Ypres, took two-thirds of the English wool-clip every year, this meant ruin for them. The Flemish merchants, indignant at the action of their Count, wished to repudiate him and make an alliance with Edward.

Edward, meanwhile, formed a league with the Emperor and various German princes of the Rhine. Philip concluded that the alliance was directed against him, and declared that Gascony and Ponthieu were thereby forfeited to the French Crown. By 1338 the two countries had drifted into war, in spite of the praiseworthy efforts of the Pope to stop them. The Flemings, led by James van Artevelde, a merchant of Ghent, made the desired alliance with Edward, and their Count fled to France.

TABLE SHOWING EDWARD III's CLAIM TO THE FRENCH CROWN



Edward  
claims  
French  
crown, 1340

Then, partly in order that his new allies might say they were not fighting against their liege lord, Edward put forward his claim to the French throne. He assumed the arms of France and the title of King of France at Ghent (1340). The title was not abandoned by his successors till the reign of George III.

Thus in three different spheres Edward hoped to gain by a successful war against France, even supposing he abandoned his claim to Philip's throne, which, as we have seen, was in any case only an afterthought. In Gascony he wished to put a stop to the French king's designs, perhaps even to restore the lost Angevin dominions. In Flanders he hoped to cement the trade alliance, so valuable to both countries, to the exclusion of the French. Finally, he hoped to crush the Scots when he had beaten their French allies. And so he embarked on the struggle which was to last for the rest of his long reign, and of which no man then living saw the end.

Popularity  
of the war

The prospect of the French war was attractive to Edward's subjects. It was popular, not only with the knightly class, but with the yeomen who supplied Edward's famous archers, and who formed, as we shall see, the backbone of his army. The army, in fact, was not a mere feudal array, but may be called the first national army that ever went out of England. France was the land of adventure to the soldier. There he might live, at the French people's expense, a fighting, roving life such as he loved, and come home laden with the plunder of rich cities and provinces. If a man joined in this adventure he cut a fine figure in the eyes of that age. The 'soldier from the wars returning' was sure of a welcome in England.

## 2. *Crécy, Calais, and the Black Death*

In June 1340, Edward embarked from Orwell (Suffolk) with a fleet of 200 vessels, drawn from all the English ports. There was then no distinction between merchant and fighting ships. The men of the Channel towns, including the Cinque Ports,<sup>1</sup> gladly provided ships to fight their French rivals. The French

<sup>1</sup> Sandwich, Dover, Romney, Hythe, and Hastings were the original Cinque Ports. Of these only Dover has survived as a large port to the present day. Romney, like Winchelsea near by, is now an inland town, owing to the silting up of the coast.

fleet, drawn chiefly from Normandy, was prepared to resist Edward's passage to Flanders. An important naval battle was fought off Sluys, near Ostend, and resulted in a complete victory for the English. After a hard fight, most of the French vessels were captured. By this victory England won the command of the Narrow Seas,<sup>1</sup> which she retained for a generation.

Edward did not at once follow up this victory, though he invaded Brittany (1342) without achieving any result. But a French attack on Gascony (1346) made him decide to invade France. An army of 2,400 cavalry and 10,000 archers embarked at Portsmouth (July 1346) and sailed for the Norman coast. A landing was made at Barfleur, and the army then marched eastward across Normandy, taking Caen on the way.

For a picture of the behaviour of the English troops on this and many another campaign we must turn to Jean Froissart, an adventurer who came to the court of Edward's queen, Philippa, and who followed Edward on his campaigns. Froissart became an historian of the war, and painted a lively picture of the times. Describing the march through Normandy (1346), he says:

'The lord Godfrey as marshall rode forth from the king's battle a six or seven leagues, in brenning (burning) and exiling the country, the which was plentiful of everything—the granges full of corn, the houses full of all riches, rich burgesses, carts and chariots, horse, swine, muttons, and other beasts; they took what them list and brought into the king's host; but the soldiers made no count to the king . . . of the gold and silver that they did get; they kept that to themselves. . . . Thus by the Englishmen was brent, exiled, robbed, wasted and pilled the good, plentiful country of Normandy.'

From this we can form an idea of the sufferings of France and of what medieval warfare was like; military discipline, as we understand it, was unknown; the country was simply abandoned to the soldiers to rob and plunder.

Edward's object was to join his allies in Flanders, but he found the bridges on the Seine broken, and marched nearly to

<sup>1</sup> The 'Narrow Seas', i.e. the channels separating England from the adjacent Continent and from Ireland.

Sluys, 1340

Invasion of  
France,  
1346

Froissart's  
account of  
the cam-  
paign

Paris before he found a crossing at Poissy. The English now struck northwards, with the French army hard on their track. The Somme was crossed near Abbeville. It was a few miles north of that town that the king drew up his forces to meet the French attack. The battle was fought at Crécy (26 August 1346).

Crécy, 1346 The battle of Crécy began late on a summer's day. The French knights, impatient of delay and confident in their superior numbers, urged King Philip to an immediate attack. A force of Genoese archers was first sent forward, but 'the English archers let fly their arrows so thick that it seemed snow', and the Genoese fled. Then the French knights dashed forward in a fierce cavalry charge, right through the ranks of the Genoese. But that mail-clad army never reached the English line. The horsemen were shot down right and left by the steady aim of the English bowmen. The French continued their fruitless attacks till darkness ended the fight. The English losses were negligible. At nightfall, the remains of Philip's army retreated to Abbeville. The victory of Crécy had established the superiority of the English archers over the heavily armed knights of feudal France.

Siege of Calais 1346-7 Edward now marched on Calais, and besieged the town by land and sea. Another large fleet was fitted out from the English ports<sup>1</sup> to capture the rival town. The siege lasted nearly a year (Sept. 1346-Aug. 1347), but at last the town was starved into surrender. Edward moved the mass of the population from their homes, since he intended to make Calais an English town. It had two advantages: it was an open door for a military invasion of France, and it was a convenient port for the wool trade with Flanders.<sup>2</sup> Calais remained in English hands for 200 years.

After the fall of Calais Edward consented to a truce, and returned home. He was now at the height of his fame. In England he found a captive king to add to his laurels. The

<sup>1</sup> It is interesting to notice the relative numbers of the ships provided by the various ports. Fowey (Cornwall) headed the list with 47 ships; Yarmouth provided 43, Dartmouth 31, London 25; seven other ports between 20 and 30 ships each.

<sup>2</sup> See Sect. 4 of this Chapter.

unfortunate David II of Scotland, urged by Philip to make a diversion in his favour, had invaded England just after Crécy. But his army was defeated at Neville's Cross, near Durham (1346), and he himself was captured. The truce of 1347 included Scotland in its scope.

There was no serious fighting for another eight years; in the interval a terrible scourge swept over Europe and England, the most deadly of all the plagues which visited Europe in medieval times. The Black Death, so called from the black boils which were the chief symptom of the disease, reached the west of England in August 1348. By Christmas it was in London, and, raging throughout 1349, it attacked every part of the island. The plague was appallingly sudden: victims usually died within twenty-four hours. There are very few records of how it affected the towns—we can only imagine how the terror raged in their narrow, filthy streets. The contagion was deadly, and it was with shuddering horror that men buried the dead in hastily dug pits—for the churchyards were full. In the country the cattle wandered untended in the fields; the crops rotted for want of labourers to gather in the harvest. The clergy suffered severely, especially the monks; and many monastic houses remained half-empty for a generation after the Black Death.

The Black  
Death  
1348-9

It is not possible to estimate the number of victims, since there were no statistics in the fourteenth century. On a moderate estimate, one in three of the population died; but in some areas the rate of mortality was higher. In the diocese of Norwich 800 parishes lost their priests in the year 1349—83 of them twice, 10 of them three times. A priest in Leicester records that, in his town alone, 300 people died in the parish of St. Leonard's, 400 in that of Holy Cross, and more than 700 in that of St. Margaret's. Many of the Manor Rolls, which record changes of tenants on the manors, tell the same tragic story.<sup>1</sup>

The  
victims

The effects of the pestilence immediately created labour problems. By the fourteenth century many lords were employing hired labourers rather than relying entirely on villein

<sup>1</sup> On some manors nearly all the tenants died, as at Haddiscoe, near Norwich, where 70 tenants died, 24 of whom left no living soul to inherit their holdings.

labour. It was these hired labourers who now, owing to the scarcity of labour, demanded higher wages than the 2*d.*<sup>1</sup> a day they had been accustomed to receive. Legislation was introduced to put a stop to this. The Statute of Labourers (1349) began by saying that 'because a great part of the people, and especially of workmen and servants', had lately died of the pestilence, 'many, seeing the necessity of masters and great scarcity of servants, will not serve unless they may receive excessive wages'. The Statute therefore laid down that workmen were to receive wages at the normal rate of pay—i.e. that before the Black Death. Workmen breaking the Statute were liable to imprisonment; masters paying more than the recognized rates were to be fined.

But it was difficult to enforce this Statute. Masters who found it hard to get any labour at all were willing to pay highly to get what they could. In a further enactment (Statute of Labourers, 1351), it was said that 'the said servants, having no regard to the said Statute, but to their ease and singular covetousness, do refuse to serve great men and other, unless they have livery and wages to the double and treble of that they were wont to take'. The Statute went on to devise further penalties for those who either gave or received higher wages.

The Statutes of Labourers (1349, 1351, 1357, 1360) also attempted to fix prices, since it was argued that if prices did not rise there was no need for labourers to ask for higher wages. The whole of this legislation was conceived in the spirit of the town and guild regulations.<sup>2</sup> Though it dealt with the whole of England, it was to be enforced by local commissions of 'justices of labourers', and so it was not as entirely impracticable as might be supposed. But the problem was too complex for fourteenth-century legislators. Still, they did try, however vainly, to deal with the situation. In this they were unlike the legislators of some later times.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> It is a very difficult problem how to express amounts of medieval money in modern money. We may perhaps reckon 2*d.* a day at about 6*s.* 8*d.* nowadays; or about £86 13*s.* 4*d.* a year, reckoning 260 working days, i.e. days of pay, in the year, or £99 for extra harvest work. In 1928, the average farm labourer's wage was about £100 13*s.*

<sup>2</sup> See Chapter IX, Sect. 4.

<sup>3</sup> In the nineteenth century it was considered outside the duty of

### 3. *The Black Prince*

Death had reaped so large a harvest in the years 1348 and 1349 that it is surprising to find kings and princes still wanting to go to war. Nevertheless, Edward III renewed his attack on France a few years later (1355). The chief command was now given to the Prince of Wales—known, from the colour of his armour, as the Black Prince—who, as a boy of sixteen, had won his spurs at Crécy. The Prince was a very successful general and the idol of England; nor had his countrymen a thought of remorse for the ruin which he inflicted on France. He began operations by conducting a murderous campaign into southern France, starting from Bordeaux. He destroyed over 500 towns and villages in seven weeks. The next year, attempting to repeat this exploit in the west, he was hemmed in by a large French army under John II, the new king. But King John was no match for the Black Prince, who won at Poitiers (1356) a victory even more crushing than Crécy. The French king was captured and sent to England.

The Black Prince

Poitiers 1356

The war went on. Besides the regular army under the Prince, the English soldiers were now organized into semi-official bands known as Free Companies, which roamed about the country, living on plunder. The wretchedness of the French population was indescribable. The peasants were not only harassed by the English raiders, but forced to pay heavy taxes towards the ransom of lords captured at Poitiers. At last, unable to bear their sufferings any longer, they rose in a rebellion known as the Jacquerie,<sup>1</sup> which broke out in the north of France (1358). They committed many crimes, and their unorganized revolt only added to the general confusion and misery. It was stamped out with the ferocity usual to that age.

The Free Companies

The Jacquerie, 1358

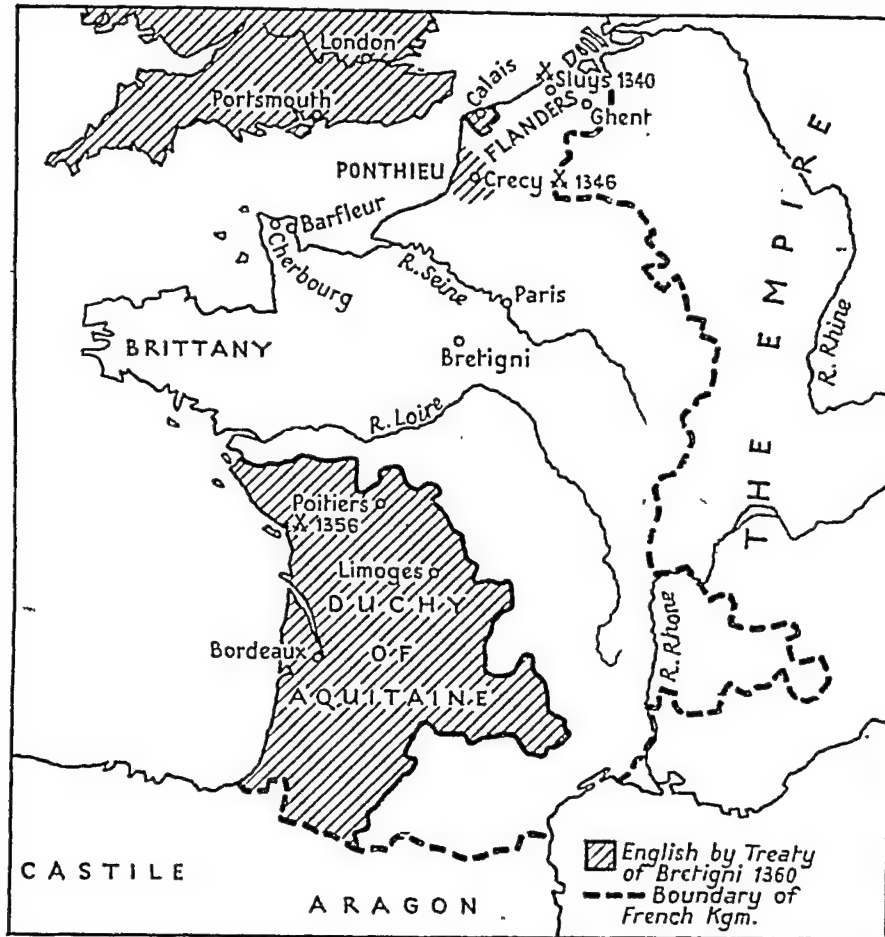
Shortly after this, Edward III imposed the Treaty of Brétigni on the French king (1360). By this treaty the duchy of Gascony was enlarged to a size comparable with the original

Treaty of Brétigni 1360

governments to interfere in wages and prices. Such things, it was held, would work themselves out in obedience to certain mysterious 'economic laws' which few people understood and no one then attempted to control. This view is nowadays losing ground.

<sup>1</sup> From Jacques Bonhomme, the nickname for a French peasant.

duchy of Aquitaine, as held by Henry II (see map). This large territory, together with Calais and Ponthieu, Edward was to hold in absolute sovereignty, and not as the vassal of the French king. In practice, however, Edward never succeeded



FRANCE IN 1360

in annexing Aquitaine, for the French nobles refused to surrender their castles to him. And so, in spite of the treaty, fighting continued.

The war now entered on a new phase. The next French king, Charles V, was a man of far greater ability than his father, John II, who died in captivity (1364). And he had, in Bertrand du Guesclin, a general of genius, who organized a national resistance against the English. The task of conquering France,



or even of holding Aquitaine, proved beyond the strength of England. The resources of the country were unequal to such an undertaking, though Edward continued to borrow money from foreign bankers. He had already ruined the Florentine bankers by repudiating his debts to them (1345).

As long as the Black Prince remained in the field there was some hope for English arms. In 1367 the Prince engaged in an attempt to restore Pedro the Cruel to the throne of Castile, the French taking the side of Pedro's rival, Henry of Trastamara. The Prince won a brilliant victory over Henry and his French allies at Navarette (1367). But as Henry was soon afterwards firmly established on the throne of Castile, the Prince's Spanish campaign was unavailing. Henry remained the ally of France.

The Black  
Prince in  
Spain, 1367

The Prince was soon back in France, inflicting more sufferings on the unfortunate people. He took and sacked the town of Limoges (1370), and gave the whole population to the sword:

Sack of  
Limoges  
1370

'It was great pity to see the men, women and children that kneeled down on their knees before the prince for mercy; but he was so inflamed with ire that he took no heed of them, so that none was heard, but all put to death. . . . There was not so hard a heart in the city of Limoges . . . but that wept piteously for the great mischief that they saw before their eyes; for more than 3000 men, women and children were slain and beheaded that day' (Froissart).

But the Black Prince's day was nearly done. He became sick of a mortal disease (1371), and the next year took ship to England, never to return to the scene of his triumphs.

The prince  
comes home  
1372

#### 4. *Wool and Cloth*

The French war bulks large in the chronicles of Edward III's reign. But the king was not only engaged in fighting; his reign is also an important landmark in the history of commerce. We have seen how king and Parliament attempted to deal with labour, wages, and prices after the Black Death. Similarly, they concerned themselves with the regulation and encouragement of trade; Edward III aimed at fostering both foreign commerce and home manufactures.

English  
wool In the fourteenth century England was the chief wool-growing<sup>1</sup> country of Europe. The Cistercians had converted the wild valleys of Yorkshire into prosperous sheep farms; the Cotswolds were another important sheep-rearing district. The chief or 'staple' exports of England were wool, hides, leather, and tin; and of these wool was by far the most important. It was sold to the great cloth manufacturing cities of Flanders, like Bruges, Ghent, and Ypres. Some time in the thirteenth century a body known as the Merchants of the Staple was formed; these merchants were granted the sole right of exporting goods from England. As the custom on wool was a considerable source of revenue to the king—he received 6s. 8d. on every sack exported—it was convenient to fix a Staple town or towns where the tax could be collected.

Merchants  
of the  
Staple When Edward III was forming his alliance with the merchants of Flanders, he made Bruges (1340) the Staple town. Then, in response to the wishes of the home merchants, he named (1353) ten of the chief towns in England as Staple towns.<sup>2</sup> But, ten years later, the advantages of Calais, which was both an English town and convenient to foreign merchants, became apparent. The Staple was moved to Calais and remained there for the rest of the reign.

Staple  
towns But Edward III's great work was to transform England from a wool-exporting country into a cloth manufacturing and exporting country. There had, indeed, been a cloth industry from very early times; there were weavers' guilds in London, Oxford, and other towns as early as the reign of Henry I, but this industry had never prospered. Edward now found artificial means to revive it.

English  
cloth  
industry First he invited weavers from Flanders to come and settle in England. John Kempe, a Flemish weaver, settled in Norwich with his workmen (1331) and there started a cloth industry on which the future prosperity of Norfolk was to

<sup>1</sup> The 'Wool-Sack' (a large square bag of wool) is the usual seat in the House of Lords of the Lord Chancellor, the highest judicial officer of the realm. It was adopted because of its symbolic meaning—the wool-trade having been the basis of England's commercial greatness.

<sup>2</sup> Newcastle, York, Lincoln, Norwich, Westminster, Canterbury, Chichester, Winchester, Exeter, and Bristol.

depend. Norwich was the centre of the new industry; and a village called Worsted, near by, gave its name to a particular kind of cloth. A statute (1337) proclaimed the most liberal treatment to foreign weavers: 'all the cloth workers of strange lands, which will come into England, Wales, and Scotland within the king's power, shall come safely and surely, and shall be in the king's protection and safe-conduct, to dwell in the same lands choosing where they will.' A century after Edward's death, the cloth industry which he had re-started had made England rich.

The king also tried the policy of 'protecting' the weavers in England from foreign competition. He did not maintain this policy consistently because, after the alliance with Flanders (1338), he was afraid of offending the Flemings. But Parliament was more concerned to favour the English manufacturer than to please the Flemings; the 'Good Parliament' (1376) demanded that wool should not be exported. The policy of protection was pursued by later kings (e.g. Edward IV); it is, in its essence, an extension of the spirit which had led the burghers of each medieval town to set up barriers against every other town.

### 5. *The English Language and Chaucer*

Edward III, by establishing the cloth industry, laid the foundations of England's commercial prosperity; and this was more important in the long run than all the glories of his French campaigns. It was in his reign, too, that the English language took shape as a literary tongue, and that English literature began to develop.

Ever since the Norman Conquest, under a succession of French-speaking kings, French had been the language of the Court and of the upper classes. The peasants spoke their own dialects, which varied in different parts of the country. Then, in the latter half of the thirteenth century, the upper classes were beginning to speak English. Edward III ordered English to be spoken in the Law Courts (1362) of the realm, on the ground that the French language was 'much unknown in the said realm'. The king commanded that 'all pleas which shall be pleaded in any courts whatsoever' should be 'pleaded,

English and  
French

answered, debated and judged' in English, but should be entered on the rolls in Latin.

The national language soon produced a national poet. Geoffrey Chaucer (1340-1400) was the son of a London vintner. He spent his youth as a page in the household of Lionel, Duke of Clarence, the king's third son, and then took service under the king. He served in some of the campaigns in France, and then was sent to Flanders and Italy on diplomatic business. It was his Italian journeys which probably introduced Chaucer to the new Italian literature, and led him to study the works of Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio. He wrote in the dialect of London and the southern midlands, and it is partly due to him that this dialect became the standard English of the whole country.

*The Canterbury Tales* Chaucer, in his most famous work, the *Canterbury Tales*, has painted an unforgettable picture of the life of fourteenth-century England. The Prologue to the Tales introduces us to thirty pilgrims going to visit the shrine of St. Thomas of Canterbury. They set out from the Tabard Inn in Southwark, riding at a foot's pace because of the bad roads of those times. They were a jolly company. There was the host, a fine comely man, with his victuals of the best and his strong wine. There was the 'very perfect gentle knight' in his coat of mail, his son, a curly-headed squire, fresh as the May morning, and the yeoman with his bow in his hand; the franklin (small country gentleman) in whose hall the table was spread all day, and in whose coops were many a fat partridge—he was chairman of the magistrates, he had been sheriff of his county and several times elected M.P. or knight of the shire; there was also the miller and the reeve of the manor, and the honest ploughman riding in his smock on a mare. Among the representatives of medieval religious life, there was the monk who loved good cheer and a day's hunting; the begging friar; the pardoner with his wallet stuffed 'full of pardon come from Rome all hot'; the prioress with her lisp and *Amor vincit omnia* engraved on her brooch; the 'clerk of Oxenford' who loved his books better 'than robés rich, or fiddle or gay psaltery'; and the ploughman's brother, the poor parson:

A good man was ther of religioun,  
 And was a pooré Persoun of a toun;  
 But riche he was of holy thoght and werk.  
 He was also a lerned man, a clerk,  
 That Cristés Gospel trewely woldé preche;  
 His parishens devoutly wolde he teche.

The professions were also of the company—the doctor of physic; the lawyer, who had often sat as justice of assize; and the pimply summoner who summoned offenders to the arch-deacon's Court. There was the sailor and the wife of Bath, who could make cloth better than the weavers of Flanders—five husbands had she married, and she had made pilgrimages to Rome and thrice to Jerusalem. Five London burgesses, members of the crafts of haberdashers, upholsterers, carpenters, dyers, weavers made up the goodly company.

In the *Canterbury Tales* we see a Merry England through the eyes of a middle-class man who loved life but who exposed with gentle satire the weaker side of the religious practice of the times. Yet all was not well with England as Edward III sank to his grave, and the darker side of the picture is vividly portrayed by another poet, Langland.<sup>1</sup> The Church was losing its influence, and the discontents of the people were soon to show themselves in the Great Revolt of the peasants.

<sup>1</sup> See below, p. 238.



Canterbury Pilgrims (from the Ellesmere MS.). The cook, the shipman, and the Knight.

## DATE SUMMARY: THE THREE EDWARDS (1272-1377)

ENGLAND	WALES, SCOTLAND, AND FRANCE
EDWARD I (1272-1307)	
1275 First Parliament Stat. Westminster I	1276-7 First Welsh War 1277 Treaty of Conway
1278 Stat. Gloucester 1279 Stat. Mortmain	1282-3 Second Welsh War 1284 Stat. Rhuddlan
1285 Stat. Winchester I Stat. Westminster II	1286 Alexander III (Scot.) <i>d.</i> 1292 John Balliol, King of Scots
1290 Expulsion of Jews 1294 Roger Bacon <i>d.</i> 1295 'Model' Parliament	1296 ✕ Dunbar 1297 ✕ Stirling Bridge 1301 Edward, Prince of Wales 1305 Wallace captured 1306 Robert Bruce, King of Scots
1297 Confirmation of Charters	
EDWARD II (1307-27)	
1311-22 Lords Ordainers 1312 Murder of Gaveston	1314 ✕ BANNOCKBURN
1322 Lancaster executed 1327 Deposition of Edward II	
EDWARD III (1327-77)	
1330 Fall of Mortimer	1328 Treaty of Northampton 1328-50 Philip VI (France) 1333 ✕ Halidon Hill 1338 HUNDRED YEARS WAR begins 1340 ✕ Sluys 1346 ✕ Crécy
1340 Birth of Chaucer	
1348-9 BLACK DEATH 1349-60 Statutes of Labourers	1356 ✕ Poitiers 1360 Treaty of Brétigni 1371-90 Robert II (Scotland) 1372 Black Prince returns from France
1372-7 John of Gaunt in power 1376 Good Parliament	

# XI

## RICHARD II AND THE LANCASTRIANS

### I. *John of Gaunt*

AFTER the retirement of the Prince of Wales from active affairs, the first man in England was his younger brother, John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster.<sup>1</sup> Gaunt had inherited great wealth by his marriage to the heiress of the House of Lancaster.<sup>2</sup> He also possessed complete control over the mind of his doting father, Edward III, now sunk into premature old age. Gaunt persuaded the king to dismiss his Chancellor, William of Wykeham, Bishop of Winchester, revered for his twin foundations of Winchester College and the 'New College' at Oxford. The duke then filled the chief offices of state with nominees of his own (1371).

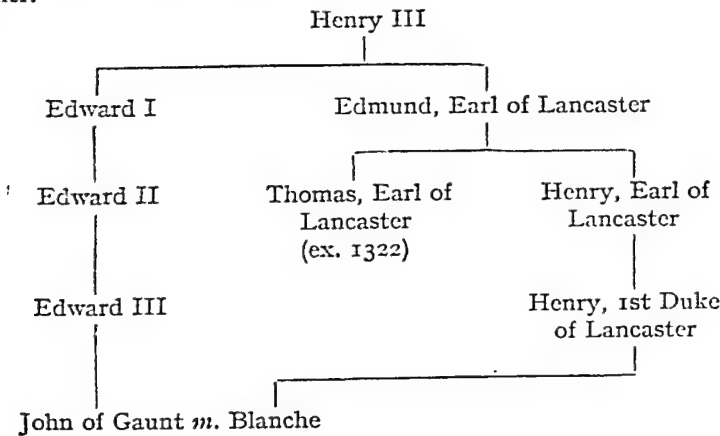
The House of Lancaster

John of Gaunt held undisputed power for five years, during which time his ministers grew rich by undisguised robbery and gross misappropriation of public funds. In France, matters could scarcely have gone worse. The alliance between the

Rule of John of Gaunt 1372-7

<sup>1</sup> Edward III had six sons: Edward, Prince of Wales (the Black Prince), *d.* 1376; William, *d.* in infancy; Lionel, Duke of Clarence, *d.* 1368; John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster; Edmund, Duke of York; and Thomas, Duke of Gloucester. The three elder sons died before their father.

<sup>2</sup>



French and the King of Castile soon bore fruit in a naval victory off Rochelle (1372), which destroyed England's sea-power, on which all else depended. After Rochelle, Edward III's continental empire fell to the ground. John of Gaunt conducted a raid through France, but only brought a fraction of his army safely to Bordeaux (1373). The French drove their enemies from Aquitaine, so that when at last the English consented to the Truce of Bruges (1375), nothing remained to them but Calais, Bordeaux, and Bayonne, with a strip of coast between the two latter towns.

Protests against these disasters were made in Parliament. The 'Good Parliament' which met at the beginning of 1376 was in pugnacious mood. While the Commons dared not attack the great duke himself, they did not shrink from attacking his ministers. It was in this Parliament that the right of 'impeaching' ministers of the Crown was first asserted by the House of Commons. Lord Latimer and Richard Lyons, who were notorious favourites of the duke, and who had grown rich out of the public distress, were impeached and condemned to the loss of their posts. It took no little courage thus to attack the duke's friends. The man who led the Commons was Peter de la Mare, their Speaker—then a speaker both in deed and in name. John of Gaunt bowed to the storm and bided his time. That same summer the Black Prince died, and Gaunt's hold over his father's feeble mind became greater than ever. A new Parliament met the next year (1377). Gaunt had carefully packed it with his own friends, and he at once proceeded to undo the work of the 'Good Parliament'. Latimer and Richard Lyons were restored to favour, and Peter de la Mare was thrown into prison.

Soon after Parliament met, the bishops summoned the famous Oxford reformer, John Wycliffe, to appear before them at St. Paul's. Wycliffe—whose career we shall outline presently—was then engaged in an attack on Church property, and in this attack he had the whole-hearted support of John of Gaunt. A confiscation of church lands, the duke thought,

<sup>1</sup> Impeachment, i.e. 'the judicial process by which any man, from the rank of a peer downwards, may be tried before the House of Lords at the instance of the House of Commons'.



would be a useful method of repairing the losses of the national exchequer. When John Wycliffe came before the bishops at St. Paul's, the great Duke of Lancaster walked by his side. Hard words passed between Gaunt and Courtenay, Bishop of London, a man as hot-headed as himself. It was a strange 'trial'. Hardly had the proceedings begun, when the London crowd, incensed at the insolence of Gaunt towards their bishop, broke up the meeting, which dispersed in confusion.

In June 1377 the old king died; and the accession of his grandson, Richard II, brought John of Gaunt's power to an end. Ambitious as he was, it is to his credit that he was loyal to his young nephew, who was then only ten years old. The duke was excluded from the new government, which was formed from among the friends of the king's mother, the Dowager Princess of Wales.

Death of  
Edward III  
1377

It was a dark outlook for the new reign. The loss of England's sea-power had had dire consequences. A few weeks after Richard came to the throne, the French launched a new series of attacks against the English coast, such as England had not known for a generation. They attacked the Sussex towns, burnt Rye and Hastings, and reached a point as far inland as Lewes; they landed in the Isle of Wight, and burnt several places. Finally they made a raid up the Thames estuary. The people of England, though strangely enough they were not tired of the war, were tired of the taxation which brought no return in victories. The Government, as usual, were blamed; and, next to the Government, the Church came in for a large share of unpopularity.

Richard II  
1377-99

French  
raids on  
England

The Church, still rich and powerful, was losing its hold over men's minds. An outcry against the Church's wealth was raised; and in this matter the House of Commons, John of Gaunt, and John Wycliffe were of one opinion.

## 2. *Wycliffe and the Church*

Probably nothing did so much to undermine the authority of the Popes in England as their seventy years' residence at Avignon. There the Popes, themselves Frenchmen and the tools of French policy, lived in retirement. The Commons of the Good Parliament spoke in indignation of the 'sinful city

of Avenon'; and the first Parliament of Richard II seriously considered the withholding of 'the treasure of the Realm, that it be not sent to foreign parts, although the Pope demand it'.<sup>1</sup>

The  
Babylonian  
Captivity  
1309-78

The 'Babylonian Captivity'<sup>2</sup> (1309-78), as the residence of the Popes at Avignon was called, was succeeded by an even worse state of affairs. For it was followed by the 'Great Schism'

The Great  
Schism  
1378-1415

(1378-1415) of the Church, during which period there were rival lines of French and Italian Popes, and for nearly forty years Europe beheld the unworthy spectacle of two Popes denouncing each other as Antichrist and excommunicating each other's followers.

Apart from this lowering of the Papal prestige, there were other symptoms in the fourteenth century of the decline of the Church's power. The day of the Saints was passed; the Church

The Church  
becomes  
unpopular

no longer commanded the reverence of the laity. Only the 'poor parson of the town' earns a word of praise from Chaucer.<sup>3</sup>

But the parson was poor; it was the wealth of the higher clergy and the monks that laid them open to criticism. There was no doubt some truth in Chaucer's picture of monkish indulgence:

I saw his slevés purfled at the hand  
With gryses<sup>4</sup>, and that the fynest of the land . . .  
He was a lord ful fat and in good point . . .  
His botés souple, his hors in greet estat . . .  
A fat swan loved he best of any roast.

Chaucer's lines reflect the spirit of his age. The attack on the Church became general. Proposals were made in Parliament for the disendowment of the Church in England; it was openly said that lands which pious lords in past times had given to churches and monasteries should be returned to their descen-

<sup>1</sup> In 1351 the first Statute of Provisors forbade Papal patronage in the English Church and aimed at preventing the Pope from 'providing' his supporters with English benefices; and in 1353 the first Statute of Praemunire (reissued and strengthened in 1393) forbade appeals in law cases to be made to foreign courts (e.g. the papal court at Avignon), and those who did so were threatened with the penalties of *praemunire*, i.e. forfeiture of goods and outlawry.

<sup>2</sup> The term is taken from the Babylonian Captivity of the Jews.

<sup>3</sup> See above, p. 229.

<sup>4</sup> gryses = grey fur.

dants. In this attack Wycliffe took a leading part; hence he received the powerful aid of Gaunt and others in his conflict with the bishops.

John Wycliffe was a Yorkshireman, born near Richmond (1320). He had come up to Oxford as a youth, and remained there as a teacher. He earned a great reputation for scholarship in Oxford, and was at one time Master of Balliol. When he was about fifty, this Oxford don began to launch his famous attack on the Church's wealth and on the lives of the clergy in general. But Wycliffe himself had not been blameless—at one time he held more absentee livings than any one else in England. His attack was twofold. The bishops and many of the clergy, he said, were immersed in affairs of state and took posts under the government which should more properly have been filled by laymen. Secondly, the Church was rich, rich beyond the dreams of her early benefactors, rich indeed beyond the example of the Apostles and the early Christians. His insistence on the need for 'apostolic poverty' led Wycliffe at first to except the friars from his censures; later, however, the friars became his bitterest enemies.

John  
Wycliffe  
1320-84

His first  
attack on  
the Church

The bishops were not prepared to submit to the scathing criticism of this learned Oxford doctor. They summoned him to a trial at St. Paul's (1377) which, as we have seen, ended in a fiasco. But since Wycliffe persisted in his charges, the Pope issued a Bull (or letter) against him. When the bishops, acting on this, again summoned the reformer to appear before them, he sheltered for a time in Oxford, where the Chancellor refused to arrest him. When at last he ventured to London, his trial at Lambeth was a repetition of that at St. Paul's. Again he was given the protection of the highest in the land, for the Dowager Princess of Wales forbade the bishops to punish him. Again the London mob interfered—this time in his favour—and broke up the proceedings (1378).

Second  
Trial of  
Wycliffe  
1378

Within two years of this triumph, Wycliffe's position had entirely changed. He developed heretical opinions which alienated his former supporters and the mass of his countrymen. This time his attack was directed, not against the wealth of the Church, but against one of its most fundamental doctrines. Wycliffe, in fact, attacked the Catholic doctrine of

His later  
heresy

Transubstantiation,<sup>1</sup> which he now declared had been invented by the clergy in order to increase their own importance.

Wycliffe's heresy had a very different effect from his first popular arguments. It brought down on him the wrath, not only of the bishops but of the friars, whom the reformer now accused of being the chief agents in spreading superstition among the people. Above all it alienated his powerful friends, who were shocked at this new departure. The Peasants' Revolt<sup>2</sup> diverted attention from him for a time; but when that disturbance was over, the Duke of Lancaster rode down to Oxford, and commanded the reformer to desist from his assault on Church doctrine. Wycliffe refused; whereupon the Duke severed his connexion with him.

Wycliffe  
loses power-  
ful friends

The Poor  
Preachers  
(Lollards)

Wycliffe meanwhile had undertaken two enterprises fraught with great consequences. During 1380 or 1381, he began to send certain of his disciples, known as the Poor Preachers, to spread his doctrines throughout England. These men were the first 'Lollards' whose successors were so violently persecuted in the next generation.<sup>3</sup> These first preachers were nearly all members of the University; and their mission had a considerable influence. They were not bound by any vows, as the friars were, though, like their enemies, they wore long gowns of a uniform colour—brown.

Translation  
of the Bible  
1380

Besides starting this preaching crusade, the indefatigable Wycliffe began (1380) a translation of the whole Bible from Latin into English, so that the words of the Scriptures should be within the reach of the common people. This undertaking incensed the clergy; and the monkish chronicler complains that 'the pearl of the Gospel is cast abroad and trampled on by swine'.

Early in 1382 the Archbishop of Canterbury commanded the Chancellor of Oxford to expel all heretics from the Univer-

<sup>1</sup> Transubstantiation, 'the conversion in the Eucharist of the whole substance of the bread into the body and of the wine into the blood of Christ, only the appearance . . . of bread and wine remaining; according to the doctrine of the Roman Church' (*O.E.D.*).

<sup>2</sup> See Sect. 3.

<sup>3</sup> See next chapter. The name 'Lollard' was given to those who 'loll'd', i.e. mumbled, prayers, as the Wycliffites were said to do.

sity; the result of this was that Oxford ceased to be the headquarters of the new movement. Several of Wycliffe's followers were brought to trial and made to recant their opinions. Nevertheless, the persecution during Richard II's reign was not violent. The king himself,<sup>1</sup> and still more his queen, Anne of Bohemia, were thought to look with tolerance on the Lollards. It was through members of the queen's household that the teaching of Wycliffe was taken to Bohemia. It was afterwards spread throughout that country by Wycliffe's greatest disciple, John Huss, who was burnt to death for his opinions (1415). Trials of  
the Lollards  
  
John Huss

No attack was made on the reformer himself. He was suffered to end his days in peace, and lived the last two years of his life at his rectory at Lutterworth, in Leicestershire. There he died (1384), and there his bones rested till Fleming, Bishop of Lincoln, caused them to be exhumed, burned, and cast into the river (1428). Wycliffe was one of the most remarkable figures of the later Middle Ages. His great learning and accurate scholarship, which even his enemies acknowledged, would in any case have entitled him to high praise. But more than this, he had the quality of following his opinions to their logical conclusion, and the courage to stand by them wherever they led him. Had the Church listened to his voice, instead of condemning him and persecuting his followers, it might have reformed itself in time. But Englishmen change their beliefs reluctantly, as was shown by the course of the Reformation, a century and a half after Wycliffe's death. Death of  
Wycliffe  
1384

### 3. *The Peasants' Revolt*

#### (i) *A Century of Unrest.*

When Richard II had been on the throne four years, England was shaken by the greatest labour upheaval in her history. Though the disasters of the French wars played their part in fomenting the general discontent, there were deeper causes at work. The Peasants' Revolt was, in its essence, a revolt against serfdom. For at least a century before 1381, the manorial system had been breaking up. This change was brought about

<sup>1</sup> The king denounced the Lollards in public, but he kept several prominent Lollards in his household.

chiefly through the agency of money. Since the growth of towns and trade, money had come much more into general circulation. Thrifty peasants sold their produce and saved enough money to buy from their lords their freedom from labour services. This process was known as 'commutation' of labour. With money, too, the lords could employ hired labourers, instead of forcing the old services on a peasantry that was beginning to demand its freedom.

New labour  
conditions

By 1381 to be a serf came to be regarded as degrading; and, before that date, we read that serfs had, in some places, formed themselves into unions in order to demand their freedom. A statute of 1377 began by complaining that some villeins

'affirm them to be quite and utterly discharged of all manner of serfage . . . and will not suffer any justice to be made upon them; but do menace the ministers of their lords of life and member, and, which is more, gather themselves together in great routs and agree by such confederacy that every one shall aid other to resist their lords with strong hand.'

We see, then, that with the weakening of the old manor system there were two types of peasant on the land—the new wage-earner and the villein as of old. Further, the presence of the free labourers was a perpetual incitement to the villeins to rid themselves of their bondage. The root of the trouble, therefore, was not that the manor system was breaking up, but that it was not breaking up fast enough.

Manor  
System  
breaks up

The penalties of the Statutes of Labourers (1349, &c.) added to the general discontent. Free labourers roamed about the country in search of higher wages; some of them, threatened with the penalties of the law for doing so, took to the woods as outlaws. There they were joined by villeins who had fled from a bondage that had become no longer endurable. The old manor life, once so secure in the tradition of centuries, had gone for ever.

England was ripe for rebellion in the latter years of the fourteenth century, and the Great Revolt was due to the various grievances of the age. It was a bitter, discontented country, as we look back to it through the eyes of William Langland, the poet of the people, and author of the *Vision of Piers Plowman*. Langland, who was born near Malvern, but lived for

Langland,  
*Piers  
Plowman*

many years in London, was a poor man all his life, unlike Chaucer, who was accustomed to the gay life of the Court. He was a visionary who dreamed that the wrongs of England should some day be righted, though he knew not how. Like Chaucer, the poet gathers his figures together—the traders, the craftsmen, the minstrels and jugglers, the villeins and freemen, the monks and friars, the pilgrims 'with their wenches after'. But Langland's pilgrimage is not to Canterbury, but to Truth. The guide whom he seeks is honest Piers Plowman, of whose dismal condition the poet says: 'As I went by the way, I saw a poor man hanging on to the plough. His coat was of a coarse stuff; his hood was full of holes and his hair stuck out of it; and as he trod the soil his toes peered out of his worn shoes.' The poet warns the lords not to oppress the poor labourer. 'Though he be thine underling now, well may hap in Heaven that he be worthier set and with more bliss than thou'—and he closes on a note of despair, for he thinks things will fare worse in England ere they get better. The second edition (1377) of the poem sounded like a prophecy of the Great Revolt.

A spirit of unrest usually produces leaders, and so it was in England in the thirteen-eighties. The best known leader of the people was John Ball, the 'mad priest' of Kent and the first <sup>John Ball</sup> English socialist who, according to the courtly Froissart, preached communism to the workers:

'My good friends', Ball would say, 'things cannot go well in England, nor ever will until everything shall be in common; when there shall be neither vassal nor lord and all distinctions levelled, when the lords shall be no more masters than ourselves. For what <sup>His Sermon</sup> reason do they thus hold us in bondage? Are we not all descended from the same parents, Adam and Eve? . . . They are clothed in velvet and fine stuffs . . . while we are forced to wear poor cloth. They have handsome seats and manors, when we must brave the wind and rain in our labours in the field.'

But, in spite of Froissart's account, communism never became a prominent idea with the peasants. They desired not to make 'all level' with themselves, but something much simpler and definite—the ending of villeinage and the raising of wages for the free workman.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Even John Wycliffe's attack on Church property played its part in

(ii) *The Revolt of 1381.*

The chief ministers in the winter of the year 1380 were Simon Sudbury, Archbishop of Canterbury and Chancellor, and Sir Robert Hales, the Treasurer. Sudbury was a well-meaning man, quite incapable of dealing with the storm which was about to burst on the nation. It was his colleague, Hales, who was responsible for a measure which actually started the revolt. Parliament decided, in order to meet the expenses of the French War, to levy a poll-tax of a shilling (per head or poll) on all persons over fifteen throughout the country.<sup>1</sup> When the results of the tax came in, it was found that many false returns had been made. The government, thus defrauded, empowered a commission to tour the country to inquire into the poll-tax returns<sup>2</sup> and, if necessary, to collect any further sums due. One such commissioner, in the last days of May 1381, rode down to Brentwood in Essex. The peasants there fell on him and drove him out of the town. Soon the whole of Essex was roused to open rebellion. Messengers rode from village to village rousing the peasants and bidding them assemble in their thousands. By the end of a week (8 June) the rebellion had assumed serious proportions. Manor houses were pillaged, and the manor court rolls—recording the villeins' services—were seized and burnt.

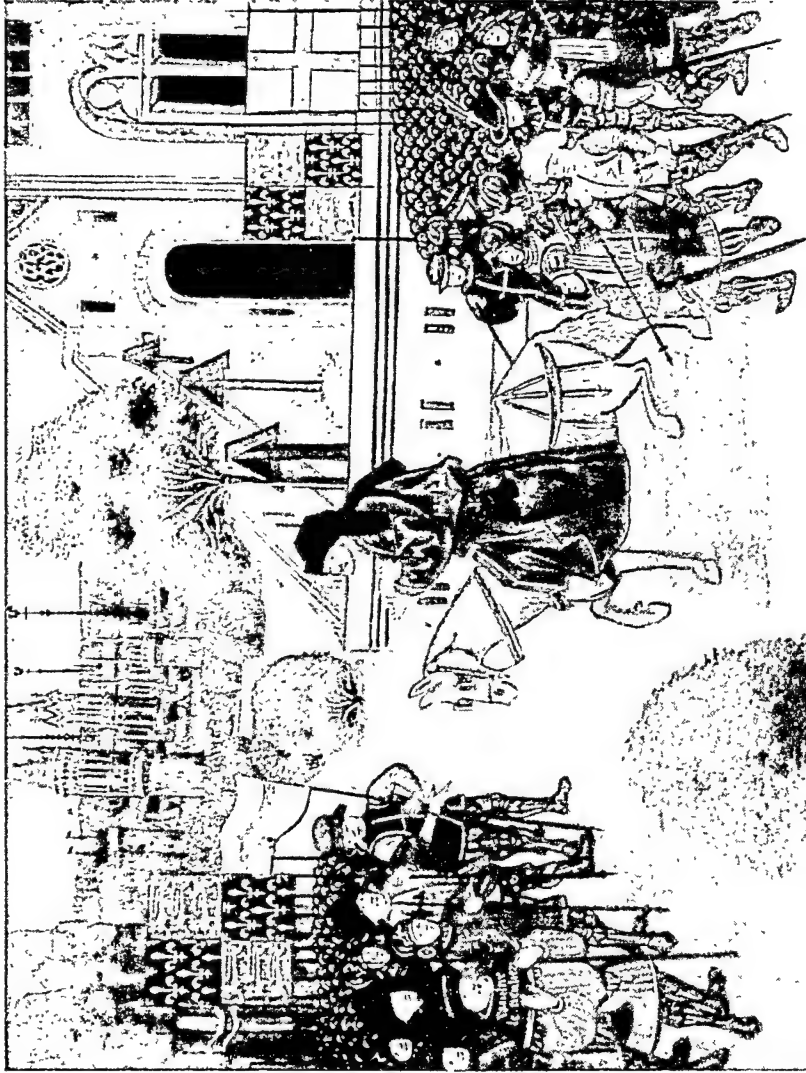
The king's Council made no effort to check the rising in Essex. Meanwhile an even more formidable rebellion had broken out in Kent; and this, together with smaller outbreaks in other counties, suggests that the whole revolt was planned beforehand. In Kent the rebel army, several thousand strong, entered Rochester, Maidstone, and Canterbury. At Maidstone they released John Ball, who had been imprisoned there since the previous April. It was probably after his release that John

the agitation—much against the design of its author. Wycliffe had condemned the payment of tithes to the Church; it was easy enough for a popular agitator or preacher to take hold of his words and say that, since to pay tithes was wrong, it was wrong also to pay manorial services to the lords.

<sup>1</sup> There had been a similar tax in 1377.

<sup>2</sup> The commissioners soon discovered frauds on a large scale, e.g. in Suffolk 13,000 persons had entirely evaded the tax.





John Ball preaching to Wat Tyler and the rebels (from a manuscript at the British Museum).

Ball issued his famous letters to all the rebels in England. 'John Ball greeteth you well all, and doth you to understand that he hath rongen your bell. Now right and might, will and skill. Now God haste you in every dele. Time it is that Our Lady help you with her Son, and her Son with His Father, to make in the name of the Trinity a good end to what has been begun. Amen.'

It was in Kent, too, that another famous rebel leader came to the front—Wat Tyler. His previous history is a doubtful record; but he had the qualities necessary to lead a mob—a bold and resourceful personality, a ready tongue, and the courage of his convictions.

The rebels now marched on London. By the night of 12 June those of Kent were encamped on Blackheath, those of Essex at Mile End, to the east of the city. It was on Blackheath that John Ball preached his most famous sermon, taking as his text the rhyme:

When Adam delved and Eve span,  
Who was then the gentleman?

Next morning (13 June) the drawbridge of London Bridge was lowered by sympathizers inside the city, and the rebels poured in. In the city they broke open the prisons, and soon all sorts of ruffians joined their ranks for the sake of plunder. For two days London was given over to anarchy. The worst sufferers were the Flemish traders—popularly supposed to be draining the wealth of England—the adherents of John of Gaunt, and the lawyers. The duke, fortunately for him, was absent in Scotland, but his servants were slaughtered at sight, and his magnificent palace, the Savoy in the Strand, given to the flames. The Temple, head-quarters of the lawyers, was laid in ruins, and its library burnt.

That evening the young king sadly watched the scene from a window in the Tower, while the flames of the Savoy, farther up the river, lit up the night. His mother and his Chancellor, the ineffective Sudbury, were with him; the most resolute man in the royal party was Walworth, the mayor of London. A council was held that night and it was determined that the king should meet the rebels at Mile End. It was hoped that, while

The rebels  
on Black-  
heath

The rebels  
in London  
13 June  
1381

Mile End  
14 June

he was conferring with them, the Chancellor and Treasurer, the special objects of the rebels' hatred, would be able to escape from the Tower. But this manœuvre failed. Probably the soldiers on duty at the Tower favoured the rebels; at any rate that strong fortress was stormed, and the mob poured in. Archbishop Sudbury and his colleague Hales were in the chapel of the White Tower; both now awaited death. Sudbury may have been a poor Chancellor and a weak Archbishop, but in this, his supreme hour, he stood unflinching. He faced the mob with a courage worthy of Becket. 'Here am I, your archbishop and no traitor,' he said. But they dragged him away and struck off his head on Tower Hill. The Treasurer Hales suffered a like fate.

Murder of  
Sudbury

The next evening, Saturday, 15 June, the king decided once more to confer with the rebels. He rode first to Westminster Abbey, where the monks came out in sorrowful procession to meet him. He dismounted and kissed the cross they carried. The royal party entered the Abbey, where Richard confessed his boyish sins. Then he rode forth to surmount the greatest crisis of the century. He was not yet fifteen years old.

The place of conference this time was the market square at Smithfield, near St. Bartholomew's Hospital. The rebels were drawn up on one side of the square; the king and his small retinue—among whom was the Mayor, Walworth—faced them on the other. Wat Tyler came forward and made a long speech. When he had done, a Kentishman in the king's guard called out that he recognized him for a notorious thief in his county. Tyler, angered at the charge, rode forward into the midst of the royal party, at the same time drawing his dagger. He tried to stab Walworth, but the mayor struck at him and wounded him with his sword. Then John Standwich, a squire of the king's, ran Tyler through the body. The rebel just managed to turn his horse and make for his own party; then he rolled off his saddle in the middle of the square, dead or dying.

Smithfield  
15 June

Death of  
Tyler

When the rebels saw the horse, trailing its rider, dash across the square, they let forth a roar of anger. Bows were bent at the king's party; in another moment all would have been over with Richard and his small guard. But at that moment the boy rode forward alone, showing not the slightest trace of

Heroism of  
Richard II

fear. He faced the angry rebels. 'What is it, my people?' he said, 'what do ye seek? Do not shoot your king. I will be your captain and your leader. Only follow me into yonder fields, and you shall have all that you desire.' Then, with a courage at least as great as that which he had just shown, he led the rebels away to some fields near St. John's Hospital, Clerkenwell, where the buildings, which the mob had destroyed, still smouldered.

This was the turning-point in the rebellion. While the king was busy granting charters of freedom at Clerkenwell, Walworth and his friends dashed back to London and rallied the loyal citizens. A band of soldiers was also collected and marched to Clerkenwell. There the rebels were surrounded and the king rescued.

Night was falling as Richard re-entered the Garde Robe. His mother greeted him with tears—'Ah, fair son, what pain and anguish have I had for you this day!' 'Certes, madam,' he replied, 'I know it well. But now rejoice and praise God, for to-day I have recovered my heritage that was lost, and the realm of England.' It was true: the revolt was over. Next day order was restored in the city. The peasants were persuaded to leave London, taking with them, poor dupes, the royal charters of pardon and freedom.

The rebels  
leave  
London

Next to Essex and Kent, where the rising had begun, the flames of revolt blazed most fiercely in East Anglia. At Bury St. Edmunds the rebels beheaded the prior of the monastery and also the Lord Chief Justice of England (who happened to be in Bury), and then terrified the monks into granting them charters of liberty. At St. Albans the townspeople rose against their lord, the abbot, and threatened, if he did not grant their demands, to pull down the Abbey and put the monks to death. The abbot was forced to sign a charter recognizing their liberty.

St. Albans

Litster in  
Norfolk

In Norfolk the leader of the peasants was Geoffrey Litster, a dyer, who forced captive knights to wait on him while he dined in Norwich Castle, after which his followers called him the 'King of the Commons'. The whole of Norfolk was soon ablaze with revolt, while King Geoffrey ruled in Norwich. The authorities seemed paralysed, until one resolute man, Henry

Despencer, the fighting Bishop of Norwich, with a small but determined band of retainers, defeated the rebels at North Walsham, and captured their leader. The 'King of the Commons' was forthwith hanged, after which the Norfolk rebellion collapsed.

Meanwhile the revolt in London had collapsed, for the mob, thinking that their demands had been granted, had dispersed. It was time to think of punishment. Chief Justice Tresillian conducted an assize through the counties most affected. King Richard went with him; at Waltham, he made it plain to a deputation of peasants that their so-called charters of liberty were worthless: 'Villeins ye are, and villeins ye shall remain.' Parliament (mainly lords of lands) could not allow the king to keep his promises and so give away the lords' property. Tresillian proceeded to punish with great severity: it was said that he spared none who came before him, and that he was avenging his profession and his murdered predecessor. The hanging of rebels went on apace.

Revocation  
of the  
Charters

One at least of the peasant leaders—William Grindecobbe, the St. Albans leader—must arouse our admiration. 'Friends,' he said before he died, 'who have won for yourselves so short a breath of freedom, hold fast while you can, and have no thought for me or what I may suffer. For if I die for the cause of liberty, I think myself happy to end my life as a martyr.'

And so, amid bloodshed and broken promises, the Great Revolt of the Peasants was quelled. Serfdom did not immediately disappear, for the lords, following the lead of king and Parliament, re-asserted their rights. Nevertheless the old system of servile labour did die out in England, and largely within fifty years of the Revolt. It came to an end through the gradual working out of changes which had been in progress for a hundred years. And after the Revolt it was no longer worth while for the lord to preserve serfdom. Instead he found it better to lease land to a 'farmer' for a money 'rent' (Latin, *firma*), to be worked by free wage-earners—and this was the origin of our modern landlord-farmer-labourer system of agriculture. In the fifteenth century a free peasantry was the rule rather than the exception. In this respect England was in

Disappear-  
ance of  
Serfdom

advance of many European countries: in France serfdom lasted till the great Revolution, and in Russia till the middle of the nineteenth century.

#### 4. *Richard II and the Lords*

Boys grew early to man's estate in the Middle Ages. At fifteen Richard II was married (1382) to Anne, sister of Wenceslaus, King of Bohemia and King of the Romans (i.e. Emperor-elect). At seventeen he took over the reins of government himself and appointed his own ministers.

Richard's Chancellor (1384) was Michael de la Pole, an old servant of Edward III, whom Richard made Earl of Suffolk. One of his chief councillors was a young man a few years older than himself, Robert de Vere, Earl of Oxford. The Chancellor De la Pole  
and de  
Vere believed—and he impressed his belief on the king—that peace with France was a necessary preliminary to the good government of England. He also believed that the power of the great nobles, particularly that of the king's uncles, should be subjected to the royal authority. Richard, who happened to have an autocratic temper, was a willing pupil of such a teacher.

Of the king's three uncles the eldest and most formidable, John of Gaunt, left England for three years (1386–9). He sailed away to wage a private war in Spain, in support of his claim to the Spanish throne.<sup>1</sup> Gaunt's ambitions in the Peninsula resembled the proverbial castles in Spain: they were founded on air. But his departure cleared the ground in England for his ambitious youngest brother, Thomas of Woodstock, Duke of Gloucester. The other brother, Edmund, Duke of York, Gloucester counted for nothing. Gloucester was an overbearing and unscrupulous man, the worst type of turbulent noble of the period. He was completely out of sympathy with his nephew, and intended, at the first opportunity, to take the government out of his hands.

Richard's quarrels with the Commons hastened this end. The king was always in money difficulties, and Parliament was always complaining that the king's personal expenses were too heavy. A more than usually fractious Parliament (1386) and

<sup>1</sup> In right of his second wife, Blanche of Castile, daughter of the deposed Pedro the Cruel.

a threatened French invasion on the south coast gave Gloucester his opportunity. He demanded that the king should be put under the tutelage of a council headed by himself. Parliament, glad of this opportunity of limiting the royal power, backed his demands, and impeached the Chancellor. Gloucester had a stormy interview with his nephew, and reminded him that kings could be deposed, citing the ominous example of Edward II. With rage in his heart the young king bowed before the storm. But only for the moment. As soon as Parliament was dissolved, he collected his friends together, bade them raise troops, and prepare for civil war. But Gloucester and his friends were prepared too. The struggle was short and sharp. De Vere's army was scattered at Radcot Bridge (1387); he fled to France. Gloucester's party formally 'appealed' for treason the Chancellor, de Vere, and the other chief advisers of the king. Richard, seeing that his cause was hopeless, gave way and submitted to his uncle.

Gloucester's  
Rebellion

Radcot  
Bridge, 1387

The Lords Appellant,<sup>1</sup> as those who had appealed the king's friends for treason called themselves, now took control. These lords were those overmighty subjects—Gloucester himself, his friends the Earls of Arundel and Warwick, and two younger men, Henry, Earl of Derby, son of John of Gaunt, and Thomas Mowbray, Earl of Nottingham, who had been a friend of Richard's boyhood. Parliament assembled (1388). It well earned the name of the Merciless Parliament, since it hunted down all the king's supporters. The two principal offenders, Suffolk and de Vere, escaped safely to France, but Tressilian, the Lord Chief Justice, the mayor of London, and many lesser offenders, were got rid of by a series of judicial murders. Even Sir Simon Burley, the king's tutor, was beheaded. Richard never forgave the men who banished and murdered his friends. Gloucester, Arundel, Warwick, Nottingham, Derby—he vowed, we may believe, to bring these five men to destruction. With the fateful exception of his cousin Derby, he lived to be revenged on them all.

The Lords  
Appellant  
1387

Merciless  
Parliament  
1388

The rule of the Lords Appellant lasted only a year. One day in 1389 Richard walked into the council chamber and asked

<sup>1</sup> Appellant, i.e. one who 'appeals' (accuses) another of treason or felony.

his uncle how old he was. 'Twenty-three,' replied Gloucester.

Good  
Govern-  
ment of  
Richard  
1389-97

In that case, Richard remarked, he was quite old enough to take the government into his own hands. Gloucester seems to have retired without making much protest. His position was considerably weakened by the return of his brother Lancaster from Spain, and by the fact that the elder duke and Richard were now friends. For the following eight years the king governed peaceably and well. He made a truce with France which was converted into a permanent peace (1396), and was the greatest blessing which he conferred on his subjects. The peace was celebrated by the king's marriage to Isabella, the eight-year-old daughter of Charles VI. Richard's first dearly loved wife, Anne of Bohemia, had died two years previously.

Peace with  
France, 1396

Was it the loss of this beloved companion that turned the king's mind to strange courses? We cannot say; certain it is that soon afterwards he abandoned his career of quiet rule, and changed from a model king into a despot by a series of swift and sudden acts. First he struck at Gloucester. He went down and arrested his uncle in person; the duke, taken off his guard, was hurried off to Calais, and there murdered (1397). Simultaneously Warwick and Arundel were accused of treason for their behaviour ten years before as Lords Appellant. Warwick's life was spared, but his property was declared forfeit; Arundel went to the block. Archbishop Arundel, the earl's brother, was banished from the realm. No action was then taken against Nottingham and Derby, who indeed acted with the king, and were consequently created dukes of Norfolk and Hereford. They imagined that Richard had forgotten.

Murder of  
Gloucester  
1397

Then, for two years, Richard governed according to his will. There was no further bloodshed, but such was the king's strange temper that no man felt safe. Parliament, too weak to oppose the party in power, was submissive. The members even went so far as to delegate their powers to a small committee, packed with the king's favourites. Richard then found an opportunity of getting rid of two more dangerous members of the nobility—the two remaining Appellants of 1397. Thomas of Norfolk and Henry of Hereford quarrelled; Norfolk accused the royal duke of treason. Just as they were about to fight a duel at Coventry the king stopped the fight and banished them



both: Hereford for six years, Norfolk for life (1398). The king now felt safe—so safe that he began to grow careless.

Banishment  
of Hereford  
1398

In February 1399 John of Gaunt died. Richard, despite the undoubted rights of the banished Hereford—now Duke of Lancaster—seized the whole of the vast Lancaster property. This act of gross injustice roused the lords of the realm who began to correspond with Henry of Lancaster. That astute personage waited for five months and then judged that the time was ripe for an invasion of England. While Richard was across St. George's Channel, quelling Irish rebels, Lancaster landed at Ravenspur, in Yorkshire, and was at once joined by the Earl of Northumberland, the greatest magnate of the North, and his son Harry Percy. Other nobles followed suit, bringing with them their armed followers. The king returned from Ireland, and landed in Wales. A force was raised for him there and another in Cheshire, but he made little attempt to rally his followers. He seems to have been dispirited by the news of Lancaster's great following in England; a curious apathy seized him, which Shakespeare has portrayed in a famous scene:

Death of  
John of  
Gaunt, 1399

Henry of  
Lancaster  
invades  
England

Say, is my kingdom lost? Why, 'twas my care;  
And what loss is it to be rid of care?  
Strives Bolingbroke to be as great as we?<sup>1</sup>  
Greater he shall not be: if he serve God  
We'll serve Him too, and be his fellow so;  
Revolt our subjects? That we cannot mend;  
They break their faith to God as well as us:  
Cry woe, destruction, ruin, loss, decay;  
The worst is death, and death will have his day.<sup>2</sup>

Finally Richard retired to Conway Castle, where he surrendered to his cousin. The wily duke, who had hitherto given out that he came but to claim his rightful estates, now laid aside these pretences and openly claimed the Crown. Richard was brought to London, lodged in the Tower, and forced to abdicate. The Houses of Parliament were summoned, and Richard's abdication was read to them. The Duke of Lancaster then formally claimed the Crown, and was hailed king as Henry IV.

Abdication  
of Richard  
II, 1399

<sup>1</sup> Bolingbroke (Lincolnshire) was Henry's birthplace.

<sup>2</sup> Shakespeare, *Richard II*, Act III, Scene ii.

TABLE SHOWING DESCENDANTS OF EDWARD III

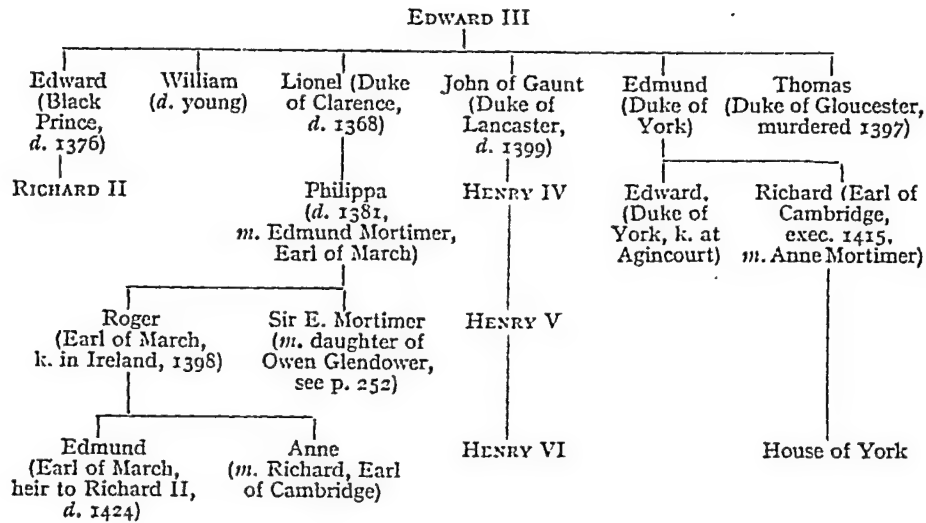
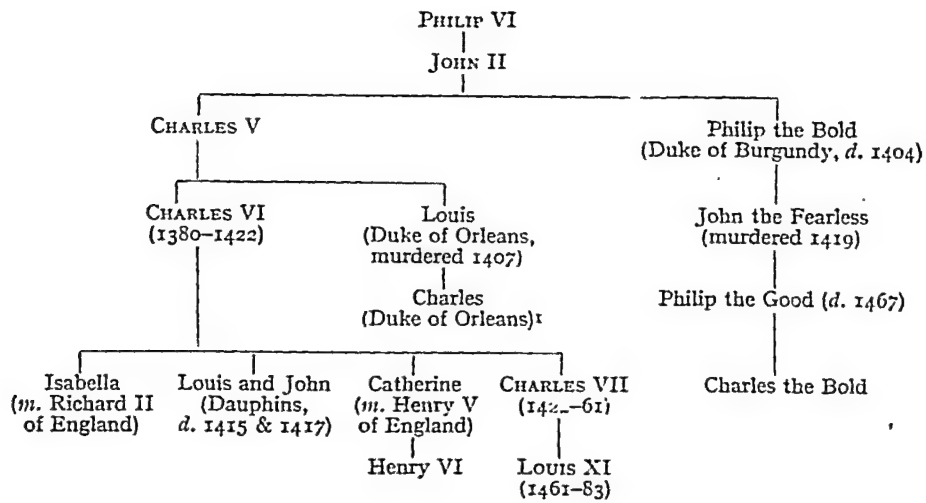


TABLE SHOWING VALOIS KINGS AND DUKES OF BURGUNDY



<sup>1</sup> Captured at Agincourt. Prisoner in England for twenty-five years.

The character of Henry's usurpation is important. He had no hereditary right to the throne, for, even setting aside Richard, the rightful heir<sup>1</sup> was the Earl of March, descended from the third son of Edward III. Lancaster, therefore, was an 'elected' king; he had no 'divine right' to his position. He owed his throne to his popularity with a majority of his countrymen who were tired of Richard's vagaries; he owed it, in particular, to the support of the Houses of Parliament. For this support the new king had to pay by sharing the supreme power with Parliament.

As for King Richard, he was taken away from London, separated from his friends, and imprisoned in Pomfret Castle. Next year he was murdered by Henry's orders (1400). His character is somewhat of a puzzle. Intellectually he was as much the superior of his usurping cousin as he was of the brutal Gloucester. That he could govern well is shown by his eight years of quiet rule (1389-97). But he was variable as the wind. The success of his stroke against the Gloucester faction seems to have turned his head. His two years' despotism alienated all classes of his subjects—but the king seems either not to have understood or not to have cared. Then comes the sudden collapse—the pitiful weakness which Shakespeare so vividly portrays in *The Tragedy of King Richard the Second*. Did he think, as Shakespeare makes him say, that

God for his Richard hath in heavenly pay  
A glorious angel

who should withstand his enemies—even his cousin of Lancaster? He passes from the scene; and a wiser, though not a better, man takes his place.

#### 5. *Henry IV* (1399-1413)

Henry IV, the first of the three kings of the House of Lancaster, was not a very attractive character. He was a solid-looking man with a good head for business and not over scrupulous. He knew how to win a throne by striking down a feeble adversary; and, what is more, he knew how to keep it by making

<sup>1</sup> See Table, opposite.

tactful concessions to the right people. The crown which he had won was no joy to him; Shakespeare's 'Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown' was applied, most rightly, to Henry IV. His reign may be divided into two halves. During the first the king was harassed by rebellions; during the second by constant ill health and the ambitions of his heir. These two divisions can be studied in dramatic form in the two parts of Shakespeare's *King Henry the Fourth*.

Rebellions  
against  
Henry IV There were four short rebellions in England during the first nine years of Henry's reign; and a longer one in Wales, which lasted most of that period. The first rebellion in England broke out before Richard II was dead. It was led by his half-brother the Earl of Huntingdon and his nephew, the Earl of Kent. The plot was betrayed to Henry, and the rebels taken and executed (1400). The discovery of this plot was followed by the murder of Richard.

Owen  
Glendower Scarcely had this revolt been crushed, when all Wales was in flame with the rising of Owen Glendower. Glendower was a Welsh landowner of Sycharth, near Corwen, and a person of learning and distinction. His rebellion began as a minor quarrel with the king, but soon assumed considerable dimensions. Glendower stirred up the old Welsh desire for freedom which had been slumbering for a hundred years. He assumed the Prince of  
Wales, 1401 ancient title of Prince of Wales (1401). He raised the old standard of the Principality—a golden dragon on a silver ground—and within two years had stirred all Wales to revolt and captured the royal castles as far south as Cardiganshire. He was joined by Sir Edmund Mortimer, uncle of the boy Earl of March, the rightful heir to Richard II. Mortimer had been sent to fight the Welshman, but was captured by Owen, made peace with his captor, and married his daughter (1402).

While Wales was thus lost to Henry, another serious rebellion broke out in the north of England. The Earl of Northumberland, that 'ladder wherewithal the mounting Bolingbroke ascends my throne', was dissatisfied with his share of the spoils.

Thou shalt think  
Though he divide the realm and give thee half,  
It is too little, helping him to all. . . .<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *King Richard II*, Act v, Sc. i.

It so happened that Northumberland's son, Henry Percy, known as 'Hotspur', had recently captured an important Scottish nobleman, Earl Douglas, at the battle of Homildon Hill (1402). The king, however, claimed the prisoner, and refused to allow the Percys to ransom him. The result was that, like Mortimer, the Percys sided with the enemy. They made terms with their prisoner, and agreed to join with him and with Glendower in an attempt to depose Henry. Hotspur, therefore, raised an army and marched towards Wales. Unfortunately for his schemes, Glendower was right in the south of Wales: he took Carmarthen on the very day Hotspur started his march. The king marched north, accompanied by his son, Prince Henry: the armies met at Shrewsbury, where Hotspur was defeated and slain (1403). Northumberland himself, who had kept out of the fight, was imprisoned for six months, then released and pardoned. Glendower kept up his resistance for several years; but the Welsh rising was eventually put down in a series of campaigns conducted by Henry, Prince of Wales. Owen Glendower, after many adventures, died in obscurity.

Hotspur

Shrewsbury  
1403

The next rebellion was that of the Earl of Nottingham, son of the Thomas Mowbray whom Richard had banished in 1398; his chief supporter was Scrope, Archbishop of York. This rising was easily suppressed, and the two chief rebels captured. They were given a summary trial—without evidence heard, and without any chance to defend themselves—and both were hurried to instant execution (1405). A feeble protest from the Pope followed Scrope's death, but Henry took no notice—a fact which said much for the decline of the Church's power since Becket's day. Henry II, the greatest prince in western Europe, had to do penance in sackcloth for the murder of Becket. Henry IV, a far lesser man, and a mere usurper on a tottering throne, could with impunity execute an archbishop after a mock trial. The last rebellion of the reign was in the north again. Old Northumberland stirred up trouble once more; this time he was slain at Bramham Moor (1408). This was the last baronial revolt in England until the Wars of the Roses.

Execution  
of Arch-  
bishop of  
York, 1405.

The most important aspect of Henry's reign was the growth of the influence of Parliament. The king was invariably short

Influence of  
Parliament

of money; the many rebellions, and the campaigns against Owen Glendower, all entailed expenditure. He was forced, therefore, to hold frequent Parliaments in order to ask for supplies. Parliament was not slow to take advantage of this state of affairs. The Parliament of 1406 persuaded the king to accede to a long petition of 31 articles, which bound him to consult a council, controlled by Parliament, before taking any important decision. But the lords were too irresponsible and too selfish to be good rulers of England, the commons too inexperienced. Parliament at this time, as we shall see, was unequal to the task of ruling England in the throes of civil war.

During the last five years of his life Henry IV suffered from a lingering illness which incapacitated him from business. His council was divided into two parties, led respectively by the Prince of Wales and Archbishop Arundel. The Prince at one time demanded that his father should resign the crown in his favour. The younger Henry also caused great scandal by the manner of his life in London, though Shakespeare has perhaps misrepresented him as a frequenter of the lowest taverns and a bosom friend of the worst characters of the town. Death at last relieved Henry IV from his many anxieties; he was reconciled to his heir just before the end. He died leaving the Lancastrian throne more secure than when he ascended it.

Death of  
Henry IV  
1413

## 6. Henry V

### (i) *The Lollards.*

The growth of Lollardry during the reign of Richard II was one of the grounds of complaint made by the clergy against that unfortunate king. Henry IV consequently started a Lollard persecution, which was carried on still more intensively by his son, Henry V. Thomas Arundel, Archbishop of Canterbury, has the unworthy distinction of being the first English bishop to hand over a heretic to be burnt at the stake. For many years burning had been the punishment for heresy, but Parliament now emphasized the existent practice by embodying it in the Statute 'De Heretico Comburendo' (1406). William Sawtre was condemned by the Archbishop's Court and burnt at Smithfield before the Act was passed. Other trials followed;

Persecution  
of Lollards

but there were not many martyrs, and many Lollards saved themselves from death by recanting their opinions.

Henry, Prince of Wales, took an active part in these persecutions, and personally supervised the burning of Lollards. He was nothing if not thorough; nor did he ever shrink from acts of cruelty which suited his purpose. When he ascended the throne as Henry V, he determined that the persecution of Lollards should be carried on more intensively. His father <sup>Henry V 1413-22</sup> had been content to strike down minor offenders; Henry V at once attacked the leading Lollard in England, Sir John Oldcastle, a man of great wealth and unusual learning. <sup>Sir John Oldcastle</sup> Oldcastle was examined, arrested, and imprisoned. At his trial he burst into violent language. 'The Pope to-day,' he exclaimed, 'is anti-Christ. Your bishops and prelates are the members of the beast, and the friars are his tail.' After such language Oldcastle could expect nothing but death; he was condemned to be burnt. But, a few days before he was due to suffer, he managed to escape from the Tower (1413).

After his escape Oldcastle determined to raise a general revolt against the king. He collected his adherents, chiefly Lollards, and planned to seize the king as he was keeping Christmas at his palace of Eltham. But Henry got word of the plot, and moved to London. In the first days of January 1414 the rebels prepared to strike; they arranged to meet secretly at St. Giles's Fields, near Charing Cross. But the king, who was already aware of their intentions, took out a strong force to meet them and surprised them as they were assembling in the dusk. Most of them escaped in the darkness, including Oldcastle. Of the captives, thirty-seven were hanged as traitors on the following day. Oldcastle survived for four years. Then he was taken on the Welsh March, and brought to London to suffer death for treason and heresy. He perished at Smithfield, <sup>Execution of Oldcastle 1417</sup> where many a lesser victim had already died in the flames (December 1417).

(ii) *The Conquest of France.*

Shortly after his accession to the throne Henry V wished to divert the attention of people and Parliament from affairs at home, and to strengthen his hold on the throne by winning

glory for himself in war. He therefore began to consider the question of reviving, in his own name, Edward III's claim to the crown of France. Edward's claim, it will be remembered, rested on the fact that his mother, Isabella of France, was a nearer relation to the late king than Philip of Valois.<sup>1</sup> In reviving the claim Henry V pretended that all the Valois kings had been usurpers. But, if crowns could descend through females, then not Henry but the Earl of March was the rightful king of England, since he represented the elder line of Lionel of Clarence.<sup>2</sup> Ignoring these facts, and calling on God to witness the purity of his intentions and the justice of his cause, Henry V proclaimed a war of conquest against France.

Henry V  
claims the  
French  
Crown

The internal conditions of France were very tempting to the invaders. The reigning king, Charles VI (1380-1422), was subject to periodical fits of insanity, lasting for months at a time. His young sons<sup>3</sup> were not old enough to rule the country, and the regency was claimed both by the king's brother, Louis of Orleans, and by his uncle, Philip the Bold, Duke of Burgundy. Philip the Bold had been given the Duchy of Burgundy by his father, John II; he had also gained by marriage the County of Burgundy, together with Flanders and Artois (see map, p. 259). He thus ruled over a substantial territory, which, by its position on the borders of France and Germany, was almost an independent state. Not content with this, Philip the Bold aspired to rule France in the name of his mad nephew. Philip died (1404); and his son John the Fearless continued the struggle against the Duke of Orleans (Charles VI's brother), whom he caused to be murdered in the streets of Paris (1407). The strife between the two factions—Burgundians and Orleanists—lasted for many years, and made good government impossible.

Burgundy  
and Orleans

It was this distracted country which Henry V decided to invade in the summer of 1415. Like some later war enthusiasts, 'he'd got the ships, he'd got the men, he'd got the money too'—

<sup>1</sup> See Table, p. 217.

<sup>2</sup> See Table, p. 250.

<sup>3</sup> See Table (France), p. 250. His two elder sons, who successively held the title of Dauphin, died before their father. The third son, Charles, afterwards became Charles VII. Two of Charles VI's daughters married kings of England.



though he had had to pawn the crown jewels to get them. Just before his departure he detected a plot against his life, led by his cousin Richard, Earl of Cambridge, younger brother of the Duke of York<sup>1</sup>. Cambridge and his two chief accomplices paid for their treason with their lives. This was the first blood shed in the struggle between York and Lancaster.

Cam-  
bridge's re-  
bellion, 1415

Landing in France with about 20,000 men, Henry laid siege to Harfleur, at the mouth of the Seine. He took it after a five weeks' siege, during which he lost two-thirds of his army through dysentery. In spite of this, Henry determined to march for Calais, and he set out across France in the autumn, with only 6,000 men. Unlike the marches of Edward III, Henry's were distinguished for the good discipline of the troops. The king forbade all plundering and burning of houses; he had no wish to set the people against their future ruler, as he hoped to be.

Henry V  
invades  
France  
1415

The English army reached the Somme. Unable to find a safe crossing at Abbeville—for the French were ready on the other bank—the king ordered a march down the river to Amiens. Beyond Amiens, where the autumn rains were turning the river-country into a swamp, the English army marched on through the Somme mud, which their descendants were to tread five hundred years later. The river was crossed near Peronne. Henry then marched northwards through Picardy where a large French army was assembling. One rainy October night the two armies encamped near Agincourt, twenty miles north of Crécy. The French outnumbered the English by four to one. The battle was fought next morning—St. Crispin's Day, 25 October 1415.

Both armies were drawn up in three divisions; the French one behind the other, the English in line. The English fought dismounted, while the French placed cavalry on their flanks. The French cavalry attacked first, but the English archers were ready for them, and many of the horses, maddened by the pain of the English arrows, bolted; the rest were stopped by stakes which the archers had planted in the ground in front of them. Then the English line advanced. The French vanguard consisted chiefly of nobles and knights who had fought to get into the place of honour;

Agincourt  
1415

<sup>1</sup> See Table, p. 250.

they were so heavily armed they could scarcely move. The ground, soaked with the previous night's rain, and trampled by thousands of feet, was a sea of mud. The English infantry, lightly clad and suitably armed (each archer carried a sword or other weapon), advanced to the attack, or rather to the slaughter or capture. For the battle resolved itself into 'the slaughter of a mass of mailed men, helplessly engulfed in a sea of mire' (Fortescue).

The battle was nearly lost, however, by a sudden French rally and unexpected attack on the English baggage and treasure. At this moment, perilous enough, there were some thousand unwounded French prisoners in the rear. Henry, with characteristic ruthlessness, gave orders for them all to be slaughtered. This prompt but scarcely chivalrous action saved the situation. While 200 archers slew the prisoners, Henry led off the rest of his force against the remaining enemy, broke their line, and ended the battle. The French lost about 5,000 killed; the English a few hundred—including the Duke of York.

Conquest of  
Normandy

After this victory Henry undertook the conquest of Normandy by a series of systematic sieges, which occupied the next three years. The French government was paralysed. Civil war was raging in Paris between the Burgundians and Orleanists. John, Duke of Burgundy, hesitated whether to join the English against the Orleanists or throw in his lot with the latter against the national enemy. Finally he decided to confer with the Dauphin Charles. The prince and the duke met on the bridge at Montereau (on the Seine). As Duke John knelt to kiss the Dauphin's hand, he was hewn down with a battle-axe by a member of the royal guard (1419).

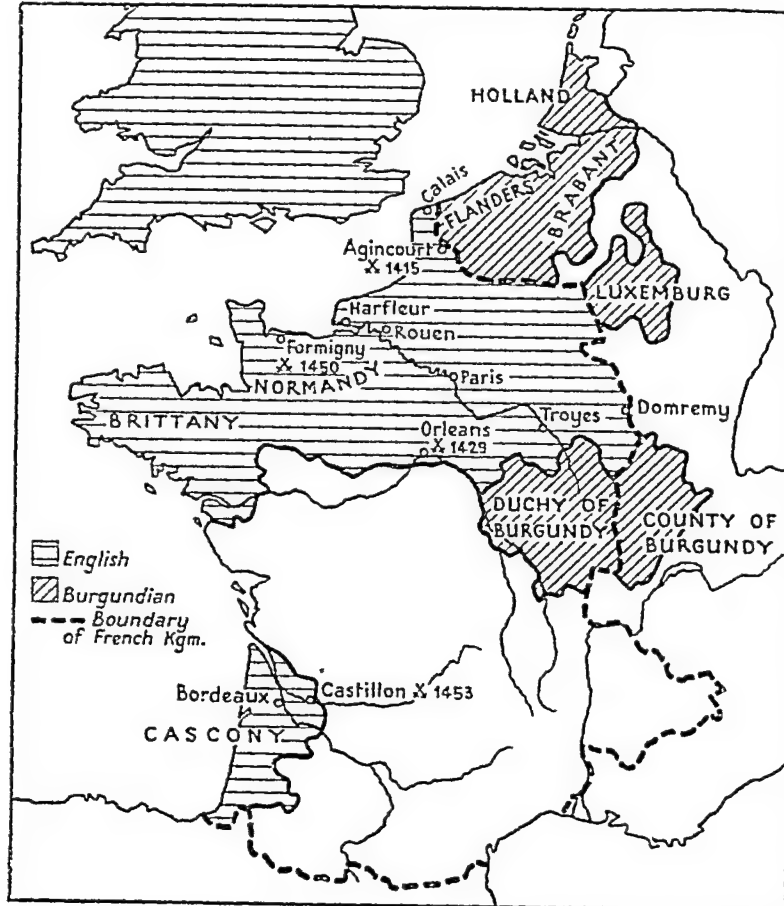
Murder of  
John of  
Burgundy  
1419

The dastardly murder of John the Fearless very nearly ruined the French cause. Philip the Good, the new duke, immediately concluded a treaty of alliance with Henry V, in order to avenge his father's murder. The Dauphin fled from Paris, which Burgundy now controlled. His ally, Henry V, came to Troyes. A treaty was drawn up and sealed in Troyes Cathedral, by which the mad king, Charles VI, was forced to disinherit his own son, the Dauphin, in favour of his daughter Catherine, who married Henry V. Henry was declared 'heir

Treaty of  
Troyes  
1420

of the kingdom of France' and promised to abandon his attempt on the throne during Charles's life (1420).

Later in the year Henry entered Paris, and then returned



FRANCE, 1413-53

to England to crown his new queen. While he was gone the Dauphin's armies attacked the English on the southern borders of Normandy. Thomas, Duke of Clarence, Henry's brother, whom he had left in command, pursued the enemy southward into Anjou. There the French won a victory—the first since the war was renewed—at Beaugé. Thomas of Clarence was

Beaugé  
1421

Death of  
Henry V  
1422 killed, and his forces dispersed (1421). Henry hurried back to France, and spent the next year consolidating his conquests. At his death they extended to the Loire. He died in the flower of his youth, worn out by his exertions (1422).

His  
character The virtues of Henry V are sufficiently obvious. He was personally brave, a good leader, and a man of vast determination and resource. Had he turned his attention and his many gifts to ruling England, he might have deserved well of his country. As it was, he wasted the wealth and resources of England on an enterprise which, in spite of his genius for war, was to prove hopeless.

Henry's was an unsympathetic character. His mind was stern and unbending. He ordered the slaughter of the prisoners at Agincourt with the same consciousness of duty and the same absence of pity with which he had once thrust a half-burnt Lollard back into the fire. He had much to answer for. The war on which he embarked so confidently dragged on for thirty years after his death. By the time it ended, England, demoralized and defeated, was in a worse state than France under the Orleanists and Burgundians. The Wars of the Roses were to a considerable extent due to the demoralization of England brought about by the long French war. The harvest sown in blood by Henry the Conqueror was reaped in tears by his unhappy son.

## XII

### LANCASTER AND YORK

#### I. *The Loss of France*

HENRY THE FIFTH died on the last day of August 1422; his mad father-in-law survived him less than two months. The heir to both kingdoms was a boy not yet a year old, Henry VI, son of Henry V and Catherine. The late king had directed that his brother John, Duke of Bedford, should be regent of France, and that his younger brother, Humphrey,<sup>1</sup> Duke of Gloucester, should be regent of England. Gloucester gave constant alarm by his unsteady conduct; he quarrelled violently with his uncle, Cardinal Beaufort, Bishop of Winchester and Chancellor, one of the younger sons of John of Gaunt, and Bedford was obliged to return to England several times to restore peace in the Council.

Henry VI  
1422-61

Bedford and  
Gloucester

But these political squabbles, disastrous as they were to prove for England, were overshadowed by the change in our fortunes in France. Bedford was a good soldier and an able administrator, but he could not work miracles. Unfortunately for him, he was confronted with a personage who claimed that she could.

Joan of Arc, the saviour of France, was a peasant girl from Domrémy, a village in the valley of the Meuse. From childhood she was visited by strange dreams; she saw visions of figures whom she believed to be St. Catherine and St. Michael—she heard voices speaking to her. After a time, these celestial messages became more definite. When Joan was about seventeen, the 'Voices' bade her put on a suit of armour like a man, and go to the Dauphin Charles, the surviving son of the

Joan of Arc

<sup>1</sup> Humphrey, called the Good Duke (1391-1447), was a great collector of manuscripts, and he was the first to give Oxford an important library of its own. The Old Reading Room at the Bodleian Library was built to contain Duke Humphrey's collection; but the manuscripts were dispersed or destroyed by the Reformers in the time of Edward VI. In Elizabeth's reign Sir Thomas Bodley refounded the library, and it takes its present name from him.

mad king, whose army she should lead to victory. Her sudden and extraordinary appearance seemed like a portent from Heaven to Charles. Hers were the first words of confidence he had heard for many a day. He decided to give her the command of an army, and allow her to lead it to the relief of Orleans (1429).

Relief of  
Orleans  
1429

The city of Orleans, on the Loire, was the key to the centre and south of France. The Maid, at the head of her troops, stormed the forts which the English held at the gates of the city, and entered it. The English fell back from Orleans, and suffered a defeat at the hands of the Maid and her army at Patay (1429). It was a wonderful success. The French soldiers cheered as they saw her white banner advancing; she inspired them with a new courage, a new enthusiasm. The English sullenly retreated, saying they had been beaten by a devil or a witch. After this Joan helped Charles to win back Champagne—eastern France—and led him to Rheims Cathedral to be crowned, as she had promised. But there her astonishing successes ended. She was captured by the Burgundians, who sold her to the English for 10,000 gold francs; she was brought to Rouen and imprisoned there.

Capture of  
Joan

Bedford was determined on the death of the Maid, for to the English soldiers she was a witch. The unhappy girl was loaded with chains, and given in charge of jailers who insulted and mocked her. In accordance with medieval practice, Gauchon, Bishop of Beauvais, claimed her for trial as a heretic in his diocese, for she declared that her Voices had not deceived her even if the Church said so. One of the worst parts of the grim story is that Charles VII, whom she had crowned and saved, did not lift a finger to save her from her accusers, or from the vengeance of the English. It is doubtful whether the Maid understood the purport of her long trial before the Court of Inquisition, though she gave some shrewd answers to the learned Inquisitors, bishops, and Doctors of the University of Paris who questioned her. At last the ordeal was over; they condemned her, noble and innocent as she was, as a witch, blasphemer, invoker of devils, and a heretic. She was handed over to the English commander, the Earl of Warwick, the same day, and burnt in the market-place of Rouen. She called

Trial of  
Joan

for a cross; an English soldier tied two sticks together and held them up to her. Then she cried aloud the name 'Jesus',<sup>1431</sup> and so died. Her death

History records few more pitiful scenes than the death of Joan the Maid scarcely two years from her first appearance as the saviour of her country. Nearly five centuries later the Pope declared the Maid a Saint.

The war went on. Bedford held on to Normandy, and to Paris; but the French, in spite of the loss of Joan, were now in a pugnacious mood. She had fired the soldiers with her own spirit, and, from that moment, the English cause was doomed. But the English refused all offers of a peace which involved surrender of the throne by Henry VI. Then Philip of Burgundy decided that the time had come to change sides, and help Charles VII to regain his heritage. So he abandoned his allies in return for the cession of Picardy by Charles (1435). It was a bitter blow for the English, who now had an enemy instead of a friend on the eastern frontier of Normandy. French  
victories  
  
Burgundy  
changes  
sides, 1435

From then on the English fought a losing fight. Three factors brought about the change in their fortunes. The first was the career and inspiration of Joan the Maid. The second was the defection of Burgundy. The third was the loss of Bedford, the able commander who had succeeded Henry V. The duke died a few days after the signing of the treaty between France and Burgundy at Arras. He was buried in the church of Notre Dame at Rouen—the same city where the ashes of St. Joan had been cast into the Seine. Death of  
Bedford  
1435

The twenty years—1435 to 1455—between the death of Bedford and the outbreak of the Wars of the Roses was a dreary time for England—the prelude of worse to come. Charles VII recovered Paris (1436), and his troops began to encroach on Normandy, and even on Gascony, where they had never before been seen. Normandy, however, was well governed by Richard, Duke of York, son of the Earl of Cambridge who had been executed in 1415, a man who was soon to play a larger part in English affairs. Charles VII  
takes Paris  
1436

In England, after the death of Bedford, the struggle of rival lords became more bitter than ever. Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, was now sole regent. His rival, Cardinal Beaufort,

was getting old, and soon retired from politics; his place was taken by his nephews, John and Edmund Beaufort, successively Dukes of Somerset (see Table, p. 272). After the death (1444) of the elder brother, John, Edmund Beaufort became what we should now call 'Leader of the Opposition'. But the game of politics was a more dangerous one in the fifteenth century than it is now: it was played with the axe and the sword.

Beaufort's great friend was William de la Pole, Earl of Suffolk, grandson of Richard II's minister. It was Suffolk who arranged a truce with France, and a marriage between the young king and Margaret of Anjou, niece to Charles VII—at the price of the surrender of Maine to the French king (1445). Few marriages could have been more unsuitable than that of Margaret and Henry. Margaret was a high-spirited girl of sixteen, a good fighter and a good hater. Later in life she showed herself the equal of men hardened in crime and in the shedding of blood. 'The she-wolf of France', Shakespeare called her,<sup>1</sup> and she earned her name. Her husband, Henry VI, was, in many respects, the worthiest of the Lancastrians. The English king was twenty-three at the time of his marriage—a mild-tempered young man, fond of study, fond of peace, devoted to religion. He was, his secretary tells us, 'a man simple and upright, altogether fearing the Lord God and departing from evil. He was a simple man without any crook or craft or untruth, as is plain to all.' His life's work was the foundation of Eton College, Windsor, and of King's College, Cambridge—nobler monuments, surely, than the fading glories of Agincourt. Unfortunately, in later life, the king became subject to attacks of insanity inherited undoubtedly from his grandfather, the mad French king; he was never able to grapple with the stern problems of the time. It was this pious, simple gentleman who reigned over England for forty of the saddest years of her history.

The new queen sided whole-heartedly with Beaufort and Suffolk. Two years after the marriage of the king, the two allies, with the queen's support, felt strong enough to strike at Gloucester. The duke was charged with treason before a

<sup>1</sup> *King Henry VI*, Part III, Act 1, Sc. iv.



Parliament held at Bury. He was thrown into prison—a prison from which he never emerged alive. The circumstances of his death are obscure, but he was quite possibly murdered, like the previous holder of the title.<sup>1</sup> The heir to the throne was now the Duke of York, representative of the line of Edmund of York and of Lionel of Clarence.<sup>2</sup> The duke's right to the succession was not to be denied; it was far stronger than the claims of Somerset, the head of the Beaufort family. The Beauforts were all descended from John of Gaunt and his third wife, Catherine Swynford, but they had been expressly debarred from the succession by Act of Parliament.<sup>3</sup> Somerset, however, enjoyed the royal favour while York did not. The latter was sent to Ireland, as Lord Lieutenant, to get him out of the way.

Death of  
Gloucester  
1447

The Duke  
of York

Meanwhile the long Hundred Years War with France was about to enter on its last phase. Charles VII began the re-conquest of Normandy (1449), a process which he completed within twelve months. Rouen fell in the autumn; in the following spring a decisive battle was fought at Formigny, near Bayeux. Somerset, who was in command, seems to have been utterly incompetent as a general, and before the end of the year (1450) the whole of Normandy was lost.

Loss of  
Normandy  
1450

These disasters had their reactions in England in a parliamentary impeachment and a popular uprising. Suffolk, the minister responsible for the conduct of the war, was impeached by Parliament and condemned for treason. He fled from the country, but as his ship was crossing the Channel it was intercepted. Sailors acting on the command of some enemy in London—who is not known—seized the unfortunate minister and beheaded him across the gunwale of a boat (May 1450). The king was heartbroken when he heard the news; but he was powerless to punish or even to detect Suffolk's murderers.

Murder of  
Suffolk  
1450

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 248.

<sup>2</sup> See Tables, pp. 250 and 273. The duke was not only the head of the House of York; he was also the representative of the elder line (descended from the third son of Edward III), through his father's marriage to the heiress of the Mortimers.

<sup>3</sup> Catherine's children were all born before her marriage to John of Gaunt. They were legitimized by Act of Parliament (1392), but debarred from the succession to the throne (1407).

The murder of Suffolk was followed, in the same month, by the revolt of Jack Cade, who pretended to be one of the Mortimers and whose object was 'to correct public abuses and to remove evil counsellors'. Cade, like Wat Tyler, hailed from Kent, where the rebellion began; and, like Tyler, he encamped with his men on Blackheath. His rebel army defeated the royal forces sent against him, and entered the capital, where Cade announced himself as John-Amend-All, come to set right the grievances of England. He demanded the dismissal of the ministers who were losing France and misgoverning England. There was fighting in London, some murders, and much damage to property. But the rebels agreed to disperse when the two archbishops promised to submit their demands to the king, and to pardon their rebellion. Nevertheless, Cade was arrested and executed a few days later by the Sheriff of Kent. Other rebels were hanged.

Meanwhile the incompetent Somerset tried to steer the ship of state through troubled waters. Disastrous news arrived from France. All Gascony was lost in two years. The decisive battle was fought at Castillon (1453), and a few weeks later the garrison of Bordeaux surrendered. The rich province of Gascony, English for 300 years, was irrevocably lost. Only Calais remained of all our French possessions.

Such was the end of the long war begun by Edward III a hundred and fifteen years previously. The wheel of fortune had turned its full circle since Henry V had started the second attempt at conquest. The change in the relative positions of France and England may be summed up thus: 'France recovered: England fell sick' (Michelet). In 1415 England was united under a strong ruler; France was torn by civil war and her king was a madman. In 1453 France was well on the road to recovery under Charles VII; England was about to embark on the murderous Wars of the Roses. It only remained, to complete the parallel, for the English king to go mad. This happened within a few weeks of the battle of Castillon.

The poor king's affliction was not so dangerous as that of his French grandfather,<sup>1</sup> but he fell into absolute idiocy; he could

<sup>1</sup> Charles VI, when he was first seized with madness, killed four men before he could be restrained.

neither speak, nor understand, nor move. The Duke of York, who returned from Ireland, was appointed Protector of the realm, claiming his right as first prince of the blood. But, almost at the same time, the birth of the Prince of Wales deprived York of his hopes of succeeding his feeble cousin on the throne. Next year Henry recovered his reason, dismissed York (who was thought by some to have had a hand in Cade's rebellion), and restored Somerset to power. Soon afterwards the queen held a council of her supporters 'to provide for the safety of the king's person against his enemies'. In other words, she intended to arrest York and all his party. The duke prepared to resist, and gathered his adherents. Both parties were ready for civil war.

York as  
Protector  
1453

## 2. *The Fall of the House of Lancaster (1455-61)*

The appeal to arms which the Duke of York made in 1455 was the prologue to the tragedy of the Wars of the Roses.<sup>1</sup> These intermittent civil wars were so called from the fact that York took the White Rose as his badge, while the royal House of Lancaster adopted the Red. The first cause of this unhappy episode in our history was the failure of the House of Lancaster to govern England. Henry V had been a strong ruler, a great conqueror, and a national hero. Henry VI was the reverse of all this. His father's conquests were lost; his ministers were hated and distrusted. Above all, the Crown was not strong enough to control the lords and keep the peace in England.

The Wars  
of the  
Roses

Weakness  
of the  
Crown

The second cause of the Wars of the Roses is to be found in the characters of the English lords and the knightly class who followed them. These men were, for the most part, mere fighting animals. They had little education and no idea of culture; their interests were confined to hunting and fighting. When the long French war came to an end, the English leaders continued their military pastimes in England. Their households

The Barons

<sup>1</sup> The fighting was by no means continuous. After the first clash in 1455 there was an uneasy peace for four years; during the next five years (1459-64) there was much fighting; then came five years' peace, followed by a further outbreak (1469-71). Lastly there was a period of fourteen years' peace before the final act of the drama was played out at Bosworth (1485).

were filled with disbanded veterans from the French wars—men accustomed to a life of violence and plunder, and fit for all kinds of mischief. The nobles could also call upon private armies of 'retainers', who were organized under an evil system known as 'livery and maintenance'. It was the practice of great lords to invite the smaller gentry and yeomen of their neighbourhood to wear their livery—sometimes an actual uniform, more often just a badge, like the Bear and Ragged Staff of the Nevilles, or the Portcullis of the Beauforts. The retainers who wore this livery agreed to fight in their lord's battles whenever he should need them; in return he undertook to 'maintain' (i.e. champion) their cause. This usually meant that the lord would appear with an armed following at local trials where his retainers were concerned and overawe the juries. Since the verdict of the jury had to be unanimous, it was seldom possible to get convictions against the friend of a great lord.

In these circumstances, it is not surprising that there were frequent skirmishes between the rival retainers of different lords. Indeed, the lords would probably have gone on fighting even if there had been no White and Red Rose to divide England into two camps. A revelation of this state of affairs is to be found in the *Paston Letters*—the correspondence of a Norfolk family which has been preserved. There, for instance, we read how Lord Moleyns seized a mansion belonging to John Paston:

'Lord Moleyns sent to the said mansion a riotous people to the number of 1000 persons arrayed in manner of war, with . . . glaives (swords), bows, arrows, guns, pans with fire, long crows to draw down houses, ladders, picks, with which they mined down the walls, and long trees with which they broke up gates and doors, and so came into the said mansion . . . and broke up all the chambers and coffers, and . . . bare away all the stuff, array and money there.'

The family of the Nevilles<sup>1</sup> played a large part in these wars. The Nevilles of Westmorland were usually fighting the Percys of Northumberland, when they were not both fighting the Scots over the Border. Richard Neville, uncle of the Earl of Westmorland, was the most powerful man of this family; he

<sup>1</sup> See Table, p. 273.

became Earl of Salisbury by his marriage to the Salisbury heiress. Salisbury and his brother were whole-hearted supporters of the Yorkist cause, and his sister Cicely married the Duke of York; Salisbury's son, the young Earl of Warwick, was also a prominent Yorkist; his part in the history of the next fifteen years was destined to be a great one.

Another family marked out for greatness was that of the Tudors. Sir Owen Tudor, a Welsh gentleman, was the founder of its fortunes, for he married Catherine of France, widow of Henry V. His two sons, Jasper and Edmund, were made Earls of Pembroke and Richmond respectively. These Tudor brothers could always raise an army for Lancaster in Wales. Edmund Tudor married Lady Margaret Beaufort, daughter of John, Duke of Somerset (see Table, p. 272). The only child of this marriage, Henry Tudor, Earl of Richmond, was born in 1457. Twenty-eight years later, by a strange turn of Fortune's wheel, he became King of England.

The peaceful, prosperous towns of England probably looked with dread on the coming conflict. At Coventry, for instance, in 1451, there were expectations of the approaching war, and it was decided to make ready the fortifications of the city against attack. At a meeting of the council, plans were drawn up for 'the strengthening of this city, if need be, which God forbid'. Portcullises were made for the gates, and iron chains to close up the ends of the city lanes. King Henry visited Coventry the next year, and thus addressed the mayor and corporation: 'We charge you with our pease among you to be kepte and that ye suffer no ryottes . . . ne (nor) congregations of lewde pepull among you, and also that ye suffer no lordes lyvereys, knyghtes, ne swyers (squires) to be reseyved of no man withe in you, for hit is agayne our statutes.'<sup>1</sup> Brave words! But the poor king could not prevent 'lordes lyvereys' from being worn, though they were 'agayne our statutes'.

The first battle of the Wars of the Roses was fought at St. Albans (1455). Though it was little more than a skirmish in the High Street and only lasted half an hour, it was a complete victory for the Duke of York. His rival, Somerset, was slain, and the king remained a prisoner in his hands. York's

The Tudors

Attitude of  
the towns

First ⚔ St.  
Albans, 1455

<sup>1</sup> Dormer Harris, *Coventry*.

York's  
second  
Protector-  
ship, 1455-6

triumph seemed complete when Henry again became insane—unfortunately for York, only for a few months—and he was made Protector for the second time (1455-6). But the revengeful queen could not rest till she had ruined him. On the king's recovery he was dismissed from power. Three years later the Yorkist leaders again took up arms, but, finding their forces insufficient, fled the country—York to Ireland, his nephew, Warwick, to Calais. From Calais Warwick controlled a fleet and the passage of the Straits. Meanwhile a Parliament, packed with Lancastrians, was summoned to meet at Coventry (1459). York, Salisbury, Warwick, and all the Yorkist leaders were condemned by an Act of Attainder,<sup>1</sup> which sentenced them to lose their lives and estates.

Wakefield  
1460

Second ♂  
St. Albans  
1461

The next year (1460) the exiles invaded England. York landed in the west, Warwick in Kent. At Northampton Warwick beat a Lancastrian army and captured the king. London opened its gates to the victor. But that December, while Warwick remained in the south, a fierce battle was fought in Yorkshire at Wakefield, where Duke Richard and his brother-in-law Salisbury were slain. The victorious queen marched on London, and at the second battle of St. Albans she defeated Warwick and re-captured the king.

Mortimer's  
Cross, 1461

Edward IV  
proclaimed  
King, 1461

But Margaret had still to reckon with Edward, Earl of March, York's eldest son, a boy of nineteen, who won a striking victory over the Welsh Lancastrians at Mortimer's Cross. After the battle Edward executed his chief prisoners—a fashion which was followed for the rest of these wars. Among the victims was Owen Tudor. Edward then joined Warwick in the Midlands and marched on London. The two earls entered the capital, where March was proclaimed king under the name of Edward IV (1461). They then marched north again, where Margaret had returned. This time she was completely defeated by Edward at the battle of Towton (1461). Those of the

<sup>1</sup> An Act of Attainder was a Bill passed by Parliament declaring the person (named) guilty of treason or felony and therefore punishable by death or outlawry. The consequence of Attainder was the 'corruption of blood' so that the condemned could neither inherit nor transmit by descent, and his estates were forfeited to the king. It was used (first in 1459) to get rid of a bad or unpopular Minister without a judicial trial—whereas Impeachment was a trial (see p. 232, note).

Lancastrian nobles who were not killed in this battle were beheaded after it was over. Margaret, her son, and husband fled to Scotland. Edward IV returned to London for his coronation.

### 3. *The King-Maker and the King*

Edward IV was scarcely more than a boy when he seized the throne of England, though he already had had experience in politics and war. He was a heavily-built, coarse-grained young man, much given to eating, drinking, and making merry—the very opposite of his saintly predecessor, Henry VI. He was not, however, without ability; and he could be cunning as well as cruel. But the deeper and darker shades of his character were unsuspected when he came to the throne.

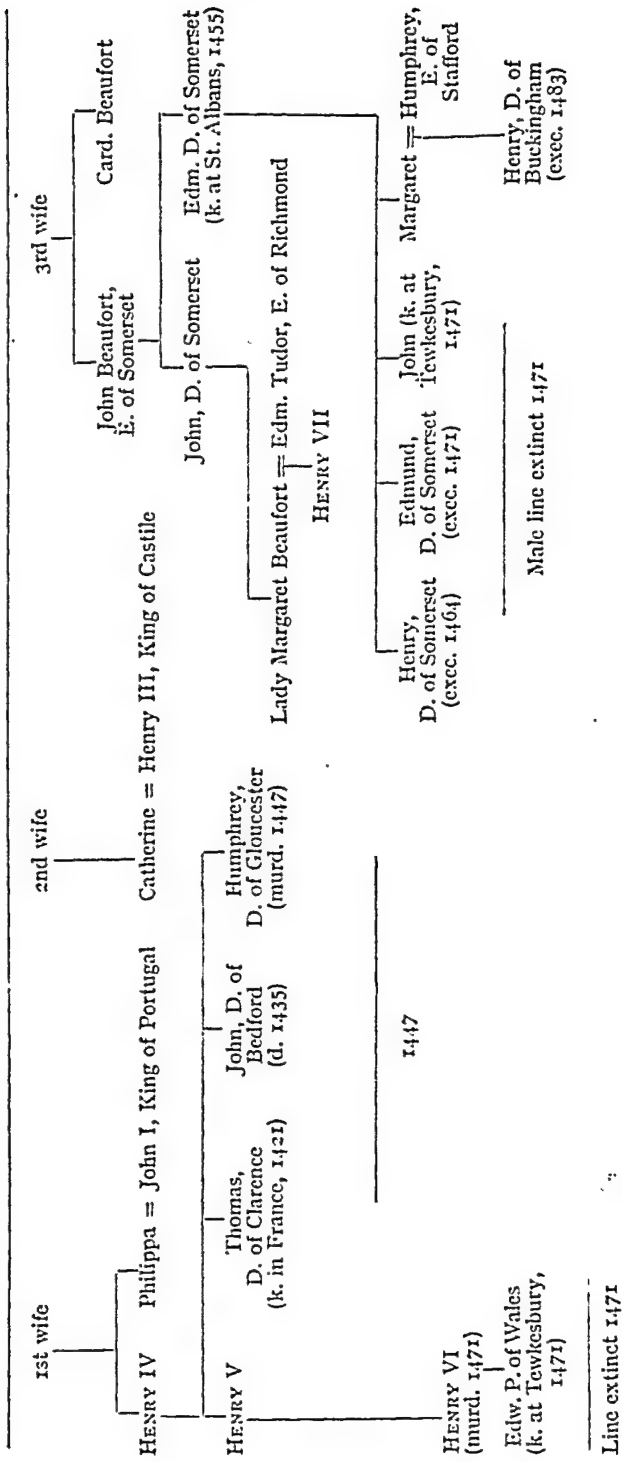
The young king was at first completely overshadowed by his cousin, the Earl of Warwick, a man fourteen years his senior. Sir John Fortescue, Lord Chief Justice, who wrote during these times a book called the *Governance of England*, remarked that the chief danger to the royal power came from 'over-mighty subjects'. For the first ten years of Edward's reign, Warwick was the greatest of such subjects. He was born in 1428, and was the eldest son of the Earl of Salisbury. When yet a boy he was married to Anne, daughter of Richard Beauchamp,<sup>1</sup> Earl of Warwick, the premier earl of England. This Earl Richard died in 1439; ten years later, after the deaths of his son and granddaughter, his estates passed, together with the title of Earl of Warwick, to his son-in-law, Richard Neville, then twenty-one years old.

We have seen that Warwick played a leading part in the battles and intrigues of the Wars of the Roses. The death of his father, Salisbury, and of his uncle, York, at Wakefield, made him both the richest and the most powerful nobleman in England. His great wealth came from the union of the

<sup>1</sup> There is no better way of picturing the power and magnificence of the later medieval earls than to visit Warwick Castle, one of the most splendid, as it is one of the least spoilt, of the castles of England. There the huge towers, raised by the Beauchamp earls in the fourteenth century, still frown down upon the Avon. In St. Mary's Church, Warwick, is the beautiful Beauchamp Chapel, where lies Richard Beauchamp, in a tomb which is one of the glories of fifteenth-century art.

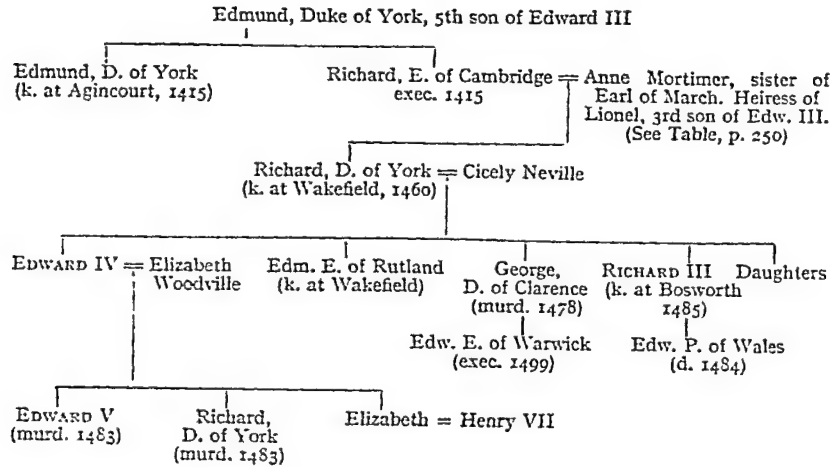
DESCENDANTS OF JOHN OF GAUNT

JOHN OF GAUNT (4th son of Edward III), Duke of Lancaster = (1) Blanche of Lancaster  
(2) Constance of Castile  
(3) Catherine Swynford

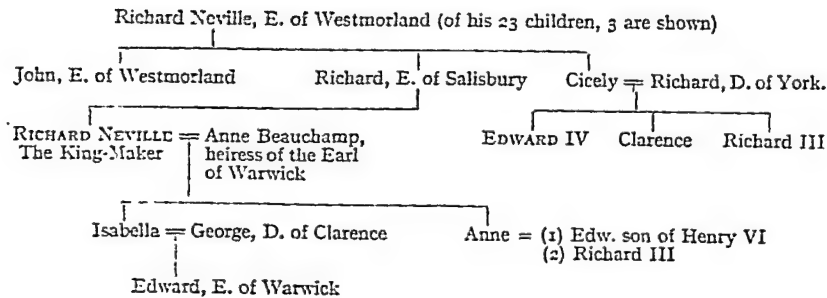




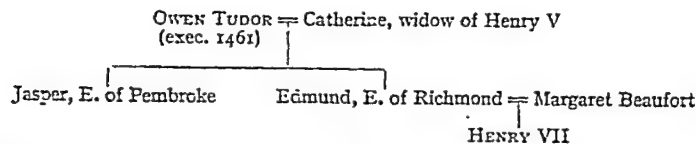
## THE HOUSE OF YORK



## THE NEVILLES



## THE TUDORS



estates of Salisbury and Warwick, inherited from his father and his father-in-law. As an experienced leader, he naturally regarded himself as the real head of the Yorkists, and he hoped to rule England in the name of his young cousin.

**Campaign  
against  
Margaret  
1464** The first anxieties of the new reign were caused by Queen Margaret, who twice invaded Northumberland. She raised an army of Scots and Lancastrians and seized most of the castles of Northumberland. This was the last rally of the Lancastrians. Warwick defeated them at the battle of Hexham (1464), which at last brought peace to the north. Bamborough Castle held out a little longer, but was eventually stormed and taken. At the siege of Bamborough cannon<sup>1</sup> were used so successfully that the stones of the castle flew into the sea. In 1465 Henry VI, a fugitive in the north, was captured in Yorkshire and brought to London, where he was imprisoned in the Tower.

**Marriage of  
Edward IV** After Hexham Edward IV was secure on his throne; but he was still entirely under the influence of his cousin. The first sign of estrangement between the two men came with the king's marriage to Elizabeth Gray, widow of Sir John Gray (a Lancastrian knight) and daughter of Richard Woodville, Lord Rivers. Warwick was furious at the favour shown to the Woodvilles, the queen's relations. But Edward was tired of his dependence on Warwick and sought means to escape from his influence—hence the promotion of the Woodvilles. The queen had five brothers, seven sisters, and two sons (by her first husband); most of these relations were now married to members of the noblest families in England. Her father, Lord Rivers, was made Treasurer; while Warwick's brother, Archbishop Neville, was dismissed from the Chancellorship.

**Rebellion of  
Warwick  
and  
Clarence  
1469** The earl was alarmed at the change in his fortunes; he began to look for allies, and found one in George, Duke of Clarence, Edward's brother. Clarence had married Isabella Neville, Warwick's elder daughter, against the king's express command. Shortly afterwards Warwick and Clarence issued a manifesto against Edward and prepared for war. All Yorkshire rose for the Nevilles, and the king was taken by surprise.

<sup>1</sup> Gunpowder was invented in the fourteenth century; cannon were used in the French wars by Edward III and Henry V—but they were scarcely more than curiosities, like the first tanks in the Great War.

He was captured and brought to Middleham Castle, one of Warwick's Yorkshire strongholds.

After a few months the earl liberated his captive, apparently imagining that he would be allowed to rule once more in the king's name. But the next year (1470) Edward had his revenge. He suddenly declared Warwick and Clarence traitors, and marched against them. They both fled overseas to France. There Warwick sought the aid of Louis XI, who reconciled the earl and his old enemy, Queen Margaret. A marriage was arranged between Margaret's son, Edward, Prince of Wales, and Warwick's younger daughter, Anne Neville. Warwick then invaded England. He landed at Dartmouth, and soon had the country at his feet. Edward escaped and fled to Burgundy (1470).<sup>1</sup>

Edward IV  
in exile  
1470

Then was seen a curious spectacle. Warwick caused the unfortunate Henry VI to be released from the Tower, where he had been imprisoned for the last five years, and enthroned in St. Paul's. But the new reign of the restored king was short. In March 1471 Edward landed at Ravenspur, in Yorkshire, the place Henry of Lancaster had chosen for a similar adventure. His brother, the fickle Clarence, had already arranged to desert the earl and joined Edward in the midlands. The rival armies met at Barnet (1471), and there the King-Maker was slain. His great enemy dead, Edward felt reasonably secure. But he had still to deal with Margaret, who landed at Weymouth on the very day of the battle of Barnet. Edward marched against her, and defeated her in a bloody battle at Tewkesbury (1471), where her son, Prince Edward, was slain by the hand of the treacherous Clarence. Margaret was captured the next day and imprisoned for four years; after which Edward gave her up to Louis XI. After his victory, and the usual executions, the king returned to London and at once gave orders for the murder of Henry VI, the unfortunate prisoner in the Tower.

Return of  
Edward  
1471

Death of  
Warwick

Tewkes-  
bury 1471,

Edward's triumph was marked by a series of cruel executions and confiscations of property, all by Acts of Attainder. He did not spare the lesser gentry—the rich were hanged by the

Acts of  
Attainder

<sup>1</sup> Note that Warwick was supported by Louis XI, and Edward by Louis' enemy, Charles the Bold, Duke of Burgundy, who had married Margaret of York, Edward's sister.

purse, and the poor by the neck' (Stubbs). The estates of the late Earl of Warwick were divided between the king's two brothers. Clarence was already married to one of the King-Maker's daughters; the other daughter, Anne, widow of Edward, Prince of Wales, was now (1472) married to Clarence's younger brother, Richard, Duke of Gloucester.

Power of  
the Yorkist  
monarchy

The rule of Edward IV now became an undisguised despotism; and in this respect his reign resembled those of the Tudors who followed him, rather than of the Lancastrians who preceded him. The first cause of this access of strength to the Crown was the military triumph of the House of York. The civil wars had thinned the ranks of the baronage, and thus decreased the danger of feudal rebellion. The King-Maker was dead; but the king still lived and reigned—without a rival.

The second cause of the strength of the Yorkist monarchy was the fact that Edward, unlike the Lancastrian kings, was not dependent on Parliament for money. He could 'live of his own'—that is, on the royal revenue, and so need not be continually begging Parliament for extra supplies. It is a very significant fact that Edward IV called no Parliament for five years—from 1478 till a few months before his death (1483).

Edward's  
revenue

What were the sources of the king's revenue which enabled him thus to dispense with Parliamentary taxation? First, there were the old feudal dues, customary since Norman times; secondly, the rents from the royal estates; and thirdly, the income from the customs duties levied at the ports. These last were substantially increased during Edward's reign. The wool trade<sup>1</sup> was booming, and England, in spite of the recent civil war—which had scarcely affected the normal life of the trading classes—was becoming a rich country. As for the royal rents, they also increased as a direct consequence of the civil wars. For the leaders of the defeated party were all condemned by Acts of Attainder, which meant that their property as well as their lives was forfeited to the Crown. Besides this, Edward managed to find other means of raising money. Sums of money—called 'benevolences'<sup>2</sup>—were extracted from rich but

<sup>1</sup> See Chapters X, Sect. 4, and XII, Sect. 5.

<sup>2</sup> Benevolences, i.e. forced loans levied without legal authority—as a token of 'goodwill' towards the king!

unwilling donors for the use of the Crown. Lastly, like his descendant Charles II, who resembled him in many ways, Edward IV became a pensioner of the King of France. His conduct in this matter was masterly, though scarcely heroic. He summoned Parliament and got the Houses to grant him supplies for a war against Louis XI. He invaded France with a large army, making a braver show than Edward III or Henry V. Then he met the French king on the bridge at Pecquigny,<sup>1</sup> accepted a gift of 75,000 crowns and a promise of a pension of 50,000 more, and returned home without fighting.

The last years of Edward's reign were stained by a crime for which even he afterwards felt some remorse—the murder of his brother. Clarence had already been guilty of treason, when he had joined Warwick, but had been forgiven, owing to his subsequent betrayal of the earl. Now he quarrelled with his younger and far abler brother, Richard of Gloucester, who inflamed the king's suspicions against him. The end of Clarence is perhaps the darkest part of all this dark history. The duke was arrested (1477), and put to death in prison the next year, by Edward's orders. False to his brother the king, false to his father-in-law, Warwick, Clarence was a wretched character. Shakespeare has depicted, in an unforgettable scene, the last haunted hours of this miserable man:

Murder of  
Clarence  
1478

I passed, methought, the melancholy flood,  
With that grim ferryman the poets write of,  
Unto the kingdom of perpetual night.  
The first that there did greet my stranger soul  
Was my great father-in-law, renowned Warwick;  
Who cried aloud, 'What scourge for perjury  
Can this dark monarchy afford false Clarence?'  
And so he vanished; then came wandering by  
A shadow like an angel, with bright hair<sup>2</sup>  
Dabbled in blood; and he shrieked out aloud  
'Clarence is come—false, fleeting, perjured Clarence—  
That stabbed me in the field by Tewkesbury—  
Seize on him, Furies! Take him to your torments!'<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> There was a grating of trellis work between the two monarchs—possibly to prevent a repetition of the tragedy on the bridge at Montreuil (see above, p. 258).

<sup>2</sup> Edward, Prince of Wales.      <sup>3</sup> *King Richard III*, Act I, Sc. iv.

Edward lived another five years after the death of his brother. He died at the early age of forty-one, leaving a little son, a boy of twelve, to succeed him. Edward IV had some talents, particularly for war, but he was too indolent and pleasure-loving to be a good ruler. As for his private character—he was as a man vicious far beyond any king that England had seen since the days of John; and more cruel and bloodthirsty than any king England had ever known' (Stubbs). The murder of Clarence was but the crowning act of a ruthless career. The lesser victims of Edward's cruelty after victory were numerous; but their names are forgotten.

Death of  
Edward IV  
1483

#### 4. *The Fall of the House of York*

On the death of Edward IV the country was faced, as at the death of Edward III, with the prospect of the reign of a boy king. As on the former occasion the young king had an uncle, who was an able and ambitious man. But, unlike John of Gaunt, Richard of Gloucester was not loyal; his ambition knew no limits and he was devoid of any moral scruples.

The young king, Edward V, was at Ludlow when his father died. He set out to join his mother in London, escorted by his uncle, Lord Rivers, and his half-brother, Sir Richard Gray. But when the royal retinue had reached Stony Stratford, the Duke of Gloucester met the king. He at once took charge of his nephew, and arrested Rivers and Gray, whom he sent to prison. On hearing this news, the queen-mother, expecting the worst, took sanctuary at Westminster. On reaching London, Richard at once had himself proclaimed Protector. He had already planned to seize the throne, and sounded the chief members of the Council on their attitude to this design. His chief ally was Henry Stafford, Duke of Buckingham; the chief opponent of the usurpation was Lord Hastings. One morning Gloucester entered the council chamber, accused Hastings of employing sorcery against him, and arrested him. 'Now, by St. Paul', quoth he, 'I will not to dinner till I see thy head off.' The unfortunate Hastings was forthwith beheaded on the green outside. At the same time Richard gave orders for the execution of Rivers and Gray.

Edward V  
1483

Richard  
Protector

Execution  
of Hastings

Richard's next step was to persuade the foolish queen to

surrender the king's younger brother, Richard, Duke of York, into his uncle's charge. When both his nephews were in his power, Richard threw off the mask. The Duke of Buckingham offered him the crown, which, after some show of resistance, he accepted. He was crowned king as Richard III (July); but before that London was horrified by the rumour that Edward V and his brother were no more. The two princes had been murdered in the Tower by their uncle's orders (1483).

Murder of  
Edward V  
and his brother,  
1483

Richard III, the fourteenth and last king of the House of Plantagenet, was undoubtedly a man of great ability and courage. Though undersized and deformed, he was not, perhaps, quite the monster that Shakespeare makes him out to be. Shakespeare, it must be remembered, was a subject of the Tudors, who naturally hated the memory of the last Yorkist king. Nevertheless, Richard III would shrink from no deed, however appalling, to gain his ends. And he overreached himself, for the murder of his nephews shocked the conscience even of that generation, accustomed as it was to deeds of blood.

Richard III  
1483-5

The Duke of Buckingham, who had helped Richard to the throne, was the first to turn against him. In the autumn of the same eventful year (1483), he rebelled. At the same time Henry Tudor, Earl of Richmond, who was in Brittany, crossed the Channel, and reached Plymouth. But, on receiving the news that Buckingham's rebellion had failed, he wisely returned. Buckingham was captured, and at once beheaded.

Buckingham's  
rebellion  
1483

In the following spring Richard lost his only son, and a year later the queen, Anne Neville, also died (1485). With revolting callousness he then proposed marriage to his niece, Elizabeth, the eldest daughter of Edward IV. It seems that her mother, Elizabeth Woodville, actually entertained the proposal, although Richard had recently put to death her brother and three out of her four sons!<sup>1</sup> But the proposal met with such opposition in the Council that Richard abandoned it. Most of the year 1485 was filled with preparations for another rebellion, and men began to correspond with Henry Tudor. Henry had little hereditary right to the throne. He could claim through his mother, Lady Margaret Beaufort, to be the representative of the Beaufort line; but that line was debarred from

Henry  
Tudor,  
Earl of  
Richmond

<sup>1</sup> Sir Richard Gray, Edward V, and the Duke of York.

the throne by Act of Parliament.<sup>1</sup> If Richard was to be deposed, his nephew, the Earl of Warwick, son of Clarence, was the obvious heir. But Warwick, like his cousin Edward V, was only a boy. Besides, the country was tired of the House of York and its deeds of blood.

Henry Tudor, therefore, hoped to try his fortunes as representative of the House of Lancaster. In August he set sail from Havre, and landed at Milford Haven in Pembrokeshire. His family connexions there stood him in good stead, and the Welshmen joined him. He advanced cautiously to Shrewsbury. Richard was at Leicester, and Henry crossed England to meet him in battle. He hoped that Lord Stanley, who had married his mother, Lady Margaret, would desert the king at the critical moment. The night before the battle Richmond spent at Atherstone in Warwickshire. In the morning he moved into Leicestershire and came upon Richard a few miles from Market Bosworth (21 August 1485).

The battle was not long, for it soon became obvious that Richard's men had no heart for the fight. Lord Stanley deserted as arranged, and Richard knew that all was over. Tradition says that he died not unworthily:

'Nay, give me my battle-axe in my hand, sett the crowne of England on my head so high,  
For by Him that made both sea and land, King of England this day I will dye.  
One foot I will never flee whilst the breath is my brest within.'  
As he said, so was it—if he lost his life, he died a king.

The crown which Richard wore in the battle was found lying in a hawthorn bush: it was placed on Henry Tudor's head by Stanley, who hailed him as Henry VII.

So ended the long conflict of the Red and the White Rose.<sup>2</sup> By good fortune and the chance of battle, England had at last obtained a king who was able to restore peace and order. The nation longed for peace, and obtained it at the price of an over-

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 265.

<sup>2</sup> Shakespeare has dramatized the long struggle from 1398 to 1485 in a series of eight plays: *King Richard II*, the two parts of *King Henry IV*, *King Henry V*, the three parts of *King Henry VI*, and *King Richard III*.



mighty monarchy, founded by Henry VII. The words which Shakespeare puts into the mouth of Henry Tudor on the field of Bosworth express the relief with which England realized that the days of civil strife were over:

Abate the edge of traitors, gracious Lord,  
That would reduce these bloody days again,  
And make poor England weep in streams of blood;  
Let them not live to taste this land's increase,  
That would with treason wound this fair land's peace!  
Now civil wounds are stopped, peace lives again;  
That she may long live here, God say Amen.<sup>1</sup>

### 5. *Trade in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries*

In the Wars of the Roses the actual combatants, especially the barons, suffered severely. But the number of men engaged was not large, and the country as a whole was not concerned in the struggle. The worst evil was lack of order, especially under Henry VI. Trade, however, prospered—above all, the cloth trade.

We have seen<sup>2</sup> how the English cloth trade was carefully fostered by Edward III. In the century which followed that king's death the cloth merchants became very prosperous. This can still be seen to-day if we visit the three chief wool-growing areas of medieval England—the West Riding of Yorkshire, East Anglia, and the Cotswolds—particularly the two last, for the West Riding has been changed by modern industrialism. In the Cotswolds, for instance, there are many magnificent churches, as at Cirencester, Northleach, and Chipping Campden, built in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries by the munificence of the cloth merchants. Greville's House, Chipping Campden, is a fine example of a wealthy cloth merchant's residence; so is Thomas Paycocke's at Coggeshall in Essex. In all parts of England the domestic architecture of the period shows a great advance. The half-timber and half-brick style, afterwards so popular in the Tudor period, was used not only for houses, but for guild-halls and hospitals, e.g. Ford's Hospital at Coventry, and the Guildhall (now part of the Grammar School), Stratford-on-Avon.

Prosperity  
of cloth  
trade

<sup>1</sup> *King Richard III*, Act v, Sc. iv.

<sup>2</sup> See above, p. 226.

Foreign  
merchants

The export of English cloth greatly increased during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. It must be borne in mind, however, that throughout the medieval period Englishmen took only a small part in the international trade of Europe. The trading centres of the Continent, from the twelfth to the fifteenth century, were north Germany, Flanders, and Italy. We will consider these in turn.

The Hansa

The trade of northern Europe was controlled by the league of the Hansa (merchant guild) of the Free Imperial Cities<sup>1</sup> of north Germany, e.g. Cologne, Hamburg, Bremen, Lübeck, and Danzig. The merchants of these rich cities controlled the trade of Germany with England, with the Scandinavian countries, and with Russia. The Baltic trade was chiefly in fish (especially the Baltic herrings for eating on fast-days) and in timber (used for shipping); the trade with Russia was mainly in furs. The Hanseatic League also controlled two of the chief overland routes to the East via Kiev and Astrakhan (see map). In England the Hansa had a factory as early as the reign of Henry II; later they built a warehouse in London known as the Steel-Yard, the site of which is now covered by Cannon Street Station; they had other houses at Boston (Lincs.) and King's Lynn. These German merchants, whom the English called Easterlings, were given special privileges by the kings of England, who borrowed money both from them and from the Italian spice merchants and bankers (who in due course settled in Lombard Street).

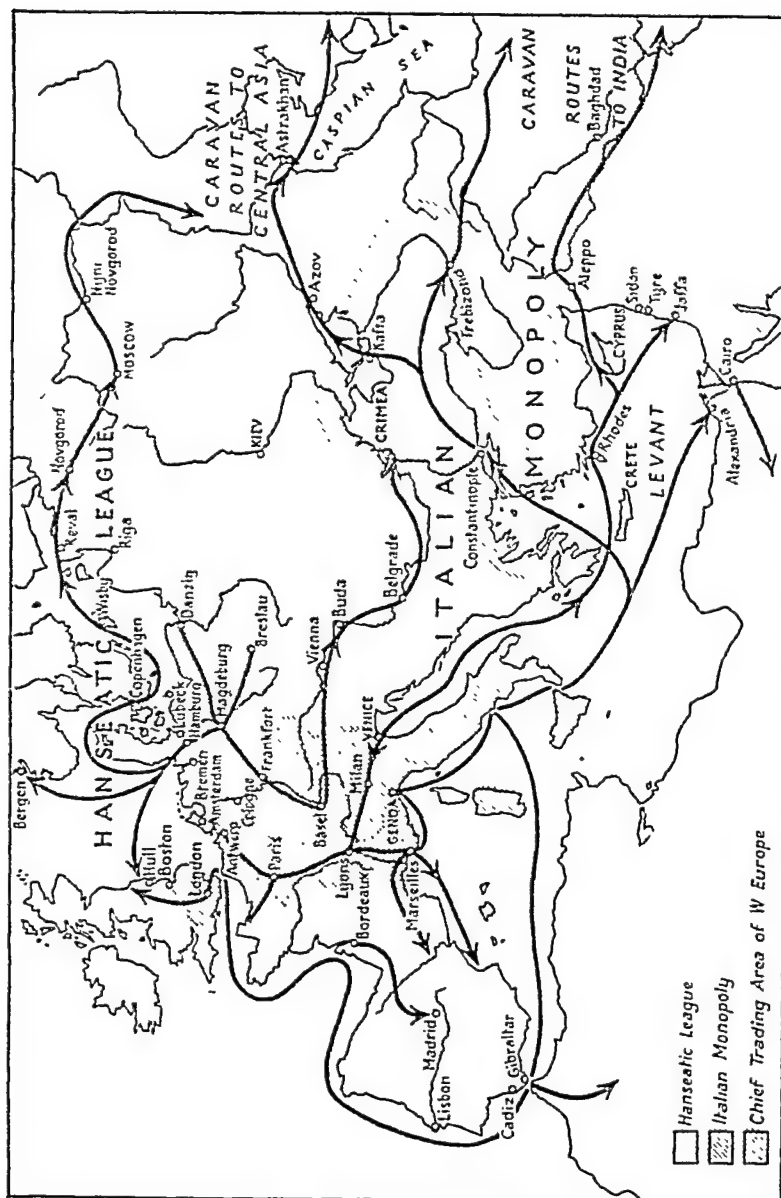
Flanders

The cities of Flanders and the Netherlands, like Bruges, Ghent, Antwerp, and Amsterdam, lay near the mouth of the Rhine, and were thus well situated at the northern end of the main overland trade-route of Europe—the Rhine valley. Their citizens lived mainly by the manufacture of cloth, and were for centuries the chief clothiers of Europe.

Venice and  
Genoa

The Italian cities of the Plain of Lombardy were situated at the other end of the Rhine trade-route. Venice and Genoa, the two chief ports of Italy, were the connecting links between the overland trade-route to north Europe and the sea-route to the East, which was an Italian monopoly (see map). These two

<sup>1</sup> The Free Cities of the Empire were self-governing, not under the dominion of any princely ruler.



MEDIEVAL TRADE ROUTES



great rival cities controlled between them all the trade of the Levant (in wine and fruit) and the Black Sea. It was also in Venetian or Genoese shipping that the produce of the eastern caravans was collected at the ports of Constantinople, Trebizond, Tripoli, and Alexandria. Indian silk was a much sought luxury in the families of European noblemen; eastern spices, like pepper and cinnamon, were also much desired to flavour the salted meat which formed a staple article of winter diet.

All this trade came to England, either in Italian ships via the Straits of Gibraltar, or in German ships across the North Sea. There was, however, for three centuries, one minor trade-route in the hands of Englishmen—the southern French wine trade, an English monopoly during the time Bordeaux was an English town (1154–1453). In the north, too, English sailors fought Germans, Danes, and Norwegians for the privilege of sharing the famous Iceland cod fishery. The market for fish (especially herrings) was large because the eating of meat was prohibited by the Church on Fridays and fast days throughout Christendom.

During the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, however, English traders made an effort to challenge the supremacy of Germans and Italians in the commerce of Europe. A trade grew up in half-manufactured English cloth, exported for finishing in Flanders. The merchants who exported this cloth, like the earlier Merchants of the Staple, formed themselves into a company, called the Merchant Adventurers, some time in the thirteenth century. The earliest known charter to the Merchant Adventurers, giving them the monopoly of the cloth exporting trade, is that of Henry IV (1407). In the same reign another charter was given (1404) to a company afterwards known as the Eastland Company, formed to sell English goods in Germany and Scandinavia, in opposition to the Hansa.

The attitude of English governments to the development of overseas trade and the encouragement of English shipping is interesting. The government was usually influenced by the fact that the foreign merchants were rich and willing to lend money, and therefore must not be offended. But in Richard II's reign a Navigation Act was passed (1382) which laid down

Bordeaux  
wine

North Sea  
fishery

The Mer-  
chant Ad-  
venturers

Navigation  
Act, 1382

that both the export and import trade should be carried on in English ships. This Act was an early, and not very successful, attempt to 'protect' the home merchant against the foreigner; it was not often observed.

Under Henry VI English commerce suffered severely. Owing to the weakness of our naval power the Easterlings made open war on English ships, and practically drove them from the seas. The friendship of the House of York with the Duke of Burgundy,<sup>1</sup> however, enabled Edward IV to obtain favourable terms for the Merchant Adventurers, by a treaty (1462) with his ally, Duke Charles. The Hansa, on the other hand, extracted concessions from Edward IV, who was obliged to borrow money from them to pay for his invasion of England (1471). By a treaty with the Hanseatic League (1474), Edward confirmed all the privileges of the German merchants in England, and so the unpopular foreigners were firmly seated in the head-quarters of English commerce.

Concessions  
to the  
Hansa

The condition of England in the fifteenth century was not so bad as a study of the Wars of the Roses might lead us to suppose. The wool trade and cloth trade were flourishing, and English merchants were making a definite effort to compete with their German and Italian rivals. However, the weakness of English sea-power under Henry VI caused a decline in overseas commerce. Though this was followed by a partial revival under Edward IV, it was not until the Tudor period that England was able to take a leading position in the commerce of Europe.

### 6. *The Passing of the Middle Ages*

The  
fifteenth  
century a  
period of  
transition

The fifteenth century is the great transitional period of English and European history. Everywhere the old order was changing. There had been signs, indeed, for some time before this, that the long-established order of the medieval world was breaking up. This is seen in England at the end of the fourteenth century, in the Peasants' Revolt and in Wycliffe's attack on the Church. The gradual ending of serfdom broke up the old economic arrangements, and prepared the way for

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 275, footnote.

sheep farming and for the rise of new trading classes. Wycliffe, the forerunner of the Reformation, anticipated the work of Martin Luther (born 1483), the German friar who led the attack on the Catholic system, which for so many centuries had reigned unchallenged. Again, the Wars of the Roses were the worst outbreak of feudal anarchy in England, reminiscent of Stephen's time—and fortunately they were the last outbreak, for they were the suicide of the feudal baronage. In the Tudor monarchy, set on the throne by the victory of Bosworth, England found her true strength. Only fifty years separated the weakness of Henry VI from the self-conscious pride of Henry VIII.

In one respect there is a great contrast between English and European history during this period. The long, disastrous reign of Henry VI, followed by the bloody progress of the House of York to power, gives an impression of weakness combined with demoralization. But still, there were signs even in England of the intellectual and artistic awakening<sup>1</sup> which was taking place in southern Europe at this time. In Italy, especially in the wonderful city of Florence, there was a great outburst of activity in the realms of literature, science, and art,<sup>2</sup> to which has been given the name of the Renaissance.

The  
Italian  
Renaissance

Among the inventions of this age, none exercised a more profound effect than that of printing by movable type. The first known European printing-press was set up by a German called Gutenberg, of Mainz (1453). Printing was introduced into England (1476) by William Caxton, once Governor of the Merchant Adventurers at Bruges, where he lived for nearly forty years and was helped by the English-born Duchess Margaret, Edward IV's sister. He probably learnt the art of printing after a visit to Cologne. Shortly after this he moved to England, where he printed, at Westminster, a book called *The Dictes or Sayengis of the Philosophres*. For the remaining fourteen years of his life Caxton wrote, translated, and printed books in London. Among his publications

Invention  
of Printing

Caxton  
1476

<sup>1</sup> See note on Duke Humphrey, p. 261.

<sup>2</sup> Even from the thirteenth century. The poet Dante (1265–1321), and the artists Cimabue (1240–1302) and Giotto (1276–1336) were all Florentines. For the Renaissance, see next Chapter.

were an edition of the *Canterbury Tales* and of Malory's *Morte d'Arthur*.

In conclusion, we may note two great movements in European history which took place during the Lancaster-York period: the rise of the Ottoman Turks, and the progress of the Portuguese mariners. The Turks first set foot in Europe in 1356, when they landed in the Gallipoli peninsula; since that fateful day they have never been entirely dislodged from this continent. In the course of a hundred years they conquered the greater part of the Balkans, attacked the Venetians in their Mediterranean islands, and finally destroyed the Eastern Roman Empire. Constantinople fell before the arms of the Sultan Mohammed II on 29 May 1453—the same year that the English were finally driven from Bordeaux. The fall of Constantinople is one of the most striking and significant events in the history of the world. There had been Roman emperors reigning in the city on the Bosphorus since Constantine founded his capital there—more than a thousand years before. But the Empire was far older than Constantine; the Turks destroyed the last feeble sparks of the mighty Roman Empire which had once dictated laws to the world.

The activities of the Portuguese sailors were significant because they turned men's thoughts away from Europe in a new direction. Prince Henry the Navigator (1394–1460), a cousin of Henry V of England,<sup>1</sup> was the man who inspired this new adventure. Under his direction, for forty years, the Portuguese steadily explored the coast of Africa. Prince Henry and others had been influenced by the tales of the wonders of the East which had been told in Europe ever since the days of the great Venetian traveller, Marco Polo (1254–1324), contemporary with our Edward I. Marco Polo's adventures during his journey to China, and an account of his seventeen years' residence in the court of the Great Khan, had been written down in a book which stirred all adventurous minds. Columbus himself possessed a copy, and made notes on many of its pages. But Prince Henry did not live to see the African trade-route to the East discovered. He died (1460) soon

<sup>1</sup> His mother was Philippa, daughter of John of Gaunt.



after the discovery of the Cape Verde Islands and the neighbouring coast-line. But his work prepared the way for the finding of the passage round the Cape of Good Hope, and for the even more momentous voyages of Columbus (born Columbus 1446). With Columbus we stand on the threshold of the modern world.



Trade in the fifteenth century. A contemporary drawing of one of the Hanseatic ports (see pp. 282-4).

## DATE SUMMARY: LATER PLANTAGENETS (1377-1485)

ENGLAND AND FRANCE	ENGLAND AND WALES (REBELLIONS)	EUROPE
	RICHARD II (1377-99)	
1380 Wycliffe translates Bible	1381 PEASANTS' REVOLT	1378 'Babylonian Captivity' ended
1382 Expulsion of Lollards from Oxford		1378-1415 Great Schism
1384 Wycliffe <i>d.</i>	1387 Gloucester's Rebellion ✕ Radcot Bridge	
1387 Lords Appellant		
1389-99 Personal government of Richard		
1396 Peace with France		
1397 Murder of Gloucester		
1398 Hereford banished		
1399 John of Gaunt <i>d.</i>	1399 Lancaster's Rebellion	
Deposition of Richard II		
HOUSE OF LANCASTER (1399-1461)		
1399-1413 Henry IV	1401 Rebellion of Owen Glen- dower	
	1403 Rebellion of the Percies ✕ Shrewsbury	
1406 Stat. de Heretico Comburendo		
1413-22 Henry V		
1415 Henry invades France. ✕ Agincourt		1415 Portuguese take Ceuta
1420 Treaty of Troyes		
1422-61 Henry VI		
Regency of Bedford and Gloucester		
1429 Joan of Arc at Orleans		
1431 Joan of Arc burnt		
1435 Bedford <i>d.</i>		
1445 Henry <i>m.</i> Margaret of Anjou		1445 Portuguese land in Guinea
		1446 Birth of Columbus
1450 ✕ Formigny. Loss of Nor- mandy	1450 Cade's Rebellion	
1453 ✕ Castillon. Loss of France End of HUNDRED YEARS WAR	1455 First ✕ St. Albans Beginning of WARS OF ROSES	1453 FALL OF CONSTANTINOPLE
	1460 ✕ Wakefield.	1460 Henry the Navigator <i>d.</i>
	1461 ✕ Mortimer's Cross	
HOUSE OF YORK (1461-85)		
1461-83 Edward IV	1461 ✕ Towton	
	1464 ✕ Hexham	
	1469 Rebellion of Warwick and Clarence	
	1471 ✕ Barnet. Warwick killed	
	✕ Tewkesbury	
1476 Caxton in England		
1478 Murder of Clarence		
1483 Murder of Edward V	1483 Buckingham's Rebellion	
1483-5 Richard III	1485 Richmond's Rebellion ✕ Bosworth	

## THE AGE OF THE RENAISSANCE—INTRODUCTION

THE Renaissance was that change in the outlook of Europe which took place during the centuries from the fourteenth to the sixteenth.<sup>1</sup> In its broadest sense the Renaissance (i.e. re-birth) affected every department of human life. But in its narrower sense it refers to the revival of the learning of ancient Greece, and to the effects of that revival on the arts and literature of modern peoples.

But why was the renewed study of Greek learning of vital importance in the history of Europe? The Greek view of life was, in many respects, the opposite to the medieval. The Church in the Middle Ages had taught men to revere authority and to find in her teaching an answer to all the problems of life, whereas the Greeks taught men to inquire and to explore rather than to accept, and to enjoy rather than to suffer. It was this attitude of mind, more than anything else, which shook the medieval world to its foundations. The views of the ancient Greeks, now re-born into the world, were in sharp contrast with the ideals of the Middle Ages. From these ideals many men for a time turned with a feeling of contempt—unmindful of the fact that, narrow as the medieval culture was in some respects, yet it gave much to the world that has never been surpassed, and that the work of the Renaissance itself was partly made possible by the achievements of the great medieval centuries.

The Renaissance was a many-sided movement: it deeply influenced learning and education, art and architecture, science and invention, geography and exploration, and, above all, religion. We will consider in turn each of these aspects.

After the fall of Rome, a knowledge of Greek had rapidly

The Revival  
of Learning

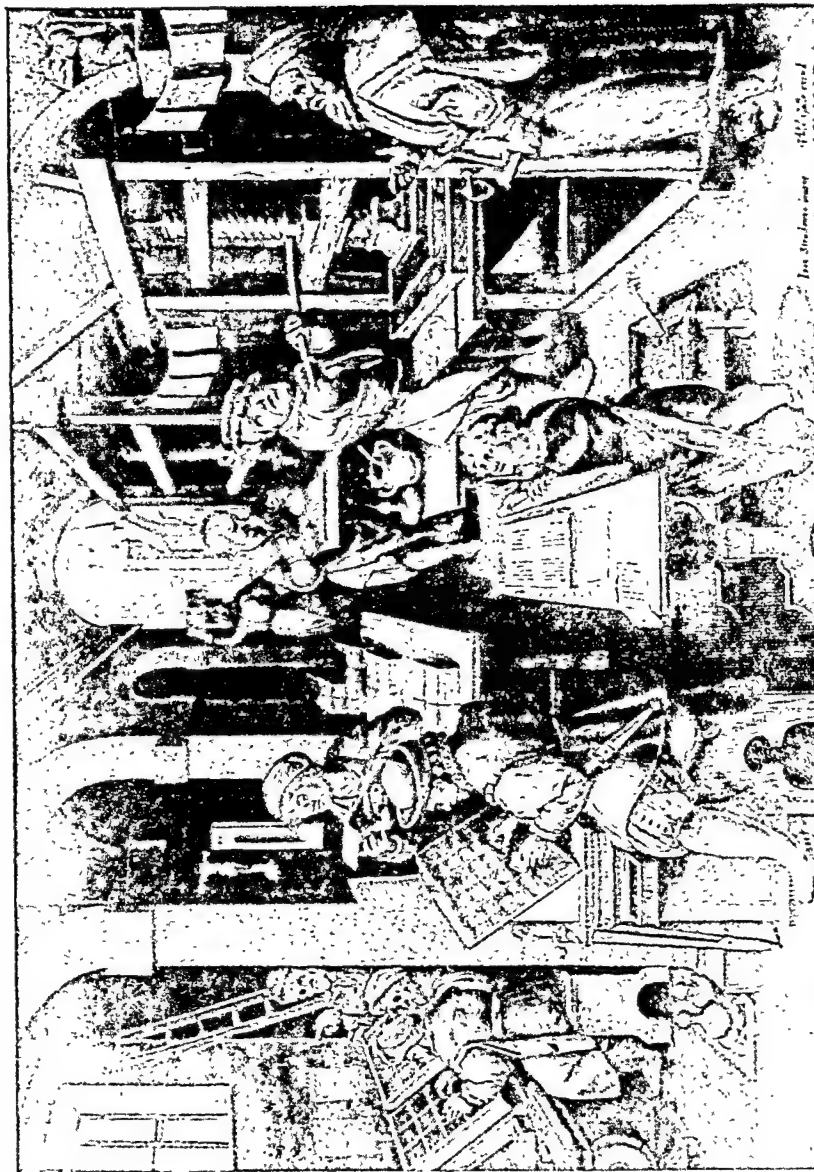
<sup>1</sup> Some historians interpret the Renaissance as covering the long period from the recovery in the West of the ancient Greek learning (which Petrarch and Boccaccio, the great Italian authors, encouraged from about 1350) to the time of Shakespeare and Newton. Others stress the shorter period from the Fall of Constantinople (1453) to the Sack of Rome (1527) as the Renaissance *par excellence*.

died out in the West and no provision was made for its teaching similar to that made for Latin. In Italy, owing to the closeness of its relations with the East, the number of scholars, monks, and others, who learnt some Greek was greater than elsewhere. It is not surprising, therefore, that the revival of learning received its main impulse from Italy. From the time (c. 1350) of Petrarch and Boccaccio, Italian scholars became more and more devoted to ancient studies, and they began to visit Constantinople, where Greek learning had been preserved. There they hunted out, copied, and eagerly studied the precious manuscripts of the past, and these opened up a new world of thought. Further, from the time that the Turks<sup>1</sup> crossed from Asia into Europe, some of the Greeks themselves began to travel westwards and to accept well-paid teaching posts in the wealthy Italian cities.<sup>2</sup> And, though the revival began in Italy, the new ideas were rapidly circulated by the new printing presses, and every nation in due course played its part in the Renaissance.

**Florence** The great and wealthy city of Florence was the centre of the Italian Renaissance. Cosimo de Medici, a merchant prince who became ruler of the city (1434-64), was a patron of the New Learning, and he encouraged Greek scholars to settle in Florence. His grandson, Lorenzo de Medici (ruled 1469-92), known as The Magnificent, loved to gather round him the learned men of the day; he spent £60,000 a year on books; and he caused 200 rare manuscripts to be brought from the East to the Medici library.

**Rome** Rome was second only to Florence as a centre of the New Learning. The Popes themselves became great patrons of learning. Nicholas V (1447-55) founded the Vatican Library, one of the greatest in the world. When the son of Lorenzo de Medici became Pope as Leo X (1513-21), the Renaissance in Rome reached its highest point. Leo made Rome, as he said, 'the capital of the world in literature, as it is in everything

<sup>1</sup> The Turks, crossing from Asia Minor, captured Gallipoli (1356), Adrianople (1361), Kossovo (Serbia, 1389). By 1400 the Balkan Peninsula was theirs—except Constantinople, which fell in 1453, the last remnant of that Byzantine or Eastern Empire which had preserved Greek learning for a thousand years after the fall of Rome.



#### THE INVENTION OF PRINTING

The interior of a printing press in the 16th century. Notice the compositors sitting in front of their cases of type, with the author's manuscript pinned up above; the man coming in at the door with a supply of paper; and the two presses, at one of which the workman is inking the type, and at the other a sheet is being printed.

else'. He provided a hundred professors for his Greek college in Rome, and he brought his father's library to the Holy City. The library was afterwards restored to Florence (where it still is) by his cousin Clement VII, another member of this remarkable Medici family.

**Printing** Fortunately, the improved manufacture of paper and the invention of printing by movable type coincided with the Revival of Learning. Movable type was made in Germany by Gutenberg of Mainz, and it was he who printed the Letter of Indulgence granted by Pope Nicholas V in aid of funds for a Crusade against the Turks, and this bears the earliest (European) printed date (1453). A generation later William Caxton introduced the printing press (1476) into England.<sup>1</sup> At the end of the fifteenth century a beautiful type, known as the *Italic*, was invented by the printer, Aldo Manuzio (1450-1515), who set up the famous Aldine Press at Venice.

**The New Learning in England** The New Learning influenced England from the time of Edward IV, and it made great headway in the reigns of Henry VII and Henry VIII when the scholars known as the Oxford Reformers were flourishing. The first Englishman to bring Greek manuscripts to England was William Selling (c. 1465), a Fellow of All Souls, Oxford, and a teacher at Christ Church School, Canterbury. One of his pupils was Thomas Linacre, who went to Florence and shared the instruction given to the young Medici princes; he read in the Vatican Library, and made the acquaintance of Aldo at Venice. Like all the great men of the Renaissance, Linacre was interested in all branches of knowledge, including medicine. He was King's Physician to Henry VII and Henry VIII, and he helped to found in London the Royal College of Physicians (1518). Another Oxford teacher who drew his inspiration from Italian sources was William Grocyn, one of the first men to give lectures on Greek literature at his University. One of Grocyn's pupils was John Colet, who visited Italy (1496) and returned to lecture on the Gospels (in the Greek original) at Oxford. Colet re-founded St. Paul's School, London (1510). He and Sir Thomas More, another man of great learning and piety, were friends of Erasmus, a Dutch scholar of international fame.

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter XII, Sect. 6.

Lady Margaret Beaufort, mother of Henry VII, was herself a patroness of the New Learning. She founded two Cambridge colleges, Christ's and St. John's, and two (still flourishing) Lady Margaret Professorships of Divinity, one at Oxford and one at Cambridge.

The Revival of Learning was one aspect of the Renaissance ; the wonderful outburst of artistic energy in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries was another. The painters of the new period broke away from the conventional art of the Middle Ages and began again to draw from living models. As with the artists, so with the sculptors. Donatello (1386-1466) 'went straight with his mighty chisel to original sources—to youth and manhood, and the love of living'. The great figures of that age—Botticelli, Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo, Raphael, Titian—still dominate the history of European art. Examples of their works, and of many other Italian artists of the Renaissance, as well as of the Northern artists—Holbein, Dürer, and others—are to be seen in the magnificent collection at the National Gallery.

It was natural that men who sought their inspiration from the Greeks should turn with renewed interest to classical architecture. The ruins of ancient Rome provided examples ready to hand ; and soon churches planned like classical temples were rising in every city in Italy. St. Peter's, Rome, was designed by Bramante, and the famous dome added by Michelangelo. But great as was the enthusiasm for this architecture, many people consider that no Renaissance building, even St. Peter's, can out-rival the wonderful Gothic cathedrals of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Renaissance architecture did not establish itself in England till the end of the reign of Queen Elizabeth,<sup>1</sup> though Henry VII's tomb at Westminster Abbey is an example of the Florentine art of the period.

The Renaissance period, filled as it was with a love of experiment, naturally produced a renewed interest in science. The Middle Ages had scarcely done more than accept the scientific theories of the ancients, often in garbled form. With the

<sup>1</sup> The seventeenth and eighteenth centuries are the age of Renaissance architecture in England ; Sir Christopher Wren was its greatest exponent. Compare St. Paul's Cathedral with St. Peter's, Rome.

exception of isolated geniuses like Friar Roger Bacon,<sup>1</sup> there were no medieval scientists worthy of the name. Practically no scientific discoveries had been made for centuries—a strange thought to the present generation, accustomed to hearing of fresh marvels every year.

Leonardo  
da Vinci

The new scientific spirit—the spirit of inquiry and experiment—is best illustrated from the life of that genius, Leonardo da Vinci (1452–1519). Like so many of the great men of that age, Leonardo was a Florentine. Not only was he a painter, sculptor, and architect of great merit; he was also a highly original thinker and a designer of scientific appliances.<sup>2</sup> A letter which he wrote to the Duke of Milan, asking for employment, is very illuminating. The first nine sections of the letter concern the use of scientific inventions in war—a sad forecast of the uses to which science was to be put in the future. Only when he arrives at the tenth section the author says: ‘In times of peace, I believe I can compete with anyone in architecture, in the construction of public and private monuments and in the building of canals. I am able to execute statues in marble, bronze and clay; in painting I can do as well as anyone else.’ Truly a remarkable man. Modern Science begins its history with the Renaissance and owes a good deal to Leonardo’s fertile brain. He was the first of a long line of experimenters whose work has continued to the present day.

Copernicus

The greatest shock to the medieval notions of the universe was given by a learned Polish canon, Copernicus. For two thousand years mankind with few exceptions had believed that the earth was the centre of the universe, and that the sun revolved round our planet every twenty-four hours. Such had been the teaching of Ptolemy, the Greek scientist. Another Greek, Pythagoras, had questioned it, and advanced the extraordinary notion that the sun, not the earth, was the centre of the universe; but there were few who accepted his theory until

<sup>1</sup> Thirteenth century—see Chapter IX, Section 3.

<sup>2</sup> His note-books have been found to contain valuable ideas in physics, dynamics, and other branches of science. For long they puzzled the students of manuscripts, and small wonder, for he used his own ‘short-hand’, wrote from right to left, and omitted the use of punctuation.



Copernicus turned his attention to the 'solar system'. Through slits cut in the walls of his house—for the telescope had not been invented—Copernicus watched the movements of the planets. Just before he died (1543) he published a book—*The Revolutions of the Heavenly Bodies*—giving to the world the results of his observations. Twenty years later the famous Galileo was born at Pisa, and it was he who perfected the telescope (a Dutch invention of 1609). He lived to popularize the theory of Copernicus, but he was nearly put to death for his pains and was forced by the Court of Inquisition to recant. The Italian Galileo, and the English Newton who discovered the laws of gravity, were the two greatest scientists of the seventeenth century.<sup>1</sup>

In the realm of geographical discovery, no age in the world's history was more momentous than the Age of the Renaissance. Columbus, who discovered America; Vasco da Gama, who found the Cape Route to India; Cabot, Cartier, and Cortez, the discoverers of Newfoundland, Canada, and Mexico; Balboa, who first sailed on the Pacific; Magellan, whose ship was the first to sail round the world—all these and many more make the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries an era without parallel in the annals of discovery.<sup>2</sup>

The new ideas which came surging into the world during the Renaissance acted in many respects as disruptive forces. This was particularly true in the realm of religion. An unquestioning acceptance of authority—i.e. of the teaching of the Catholic Church—was the keynote of the medieval attitude to life, but an eager, inquiring generation began to question this attitude. Men, too, were shocked by the moral decay of the Church and of the Papacy; voices were raised demanding reforms. Some reformers, like Colet and Erasmus,<sup>3</sup> tried to reconcile the new ideas with the Church of Rome and worked to reform it; others, of whom Luther was the greatest, rejected altogether its authority. The revolution in European history known as the Reformation was an indirect result of the Renaissance—of the

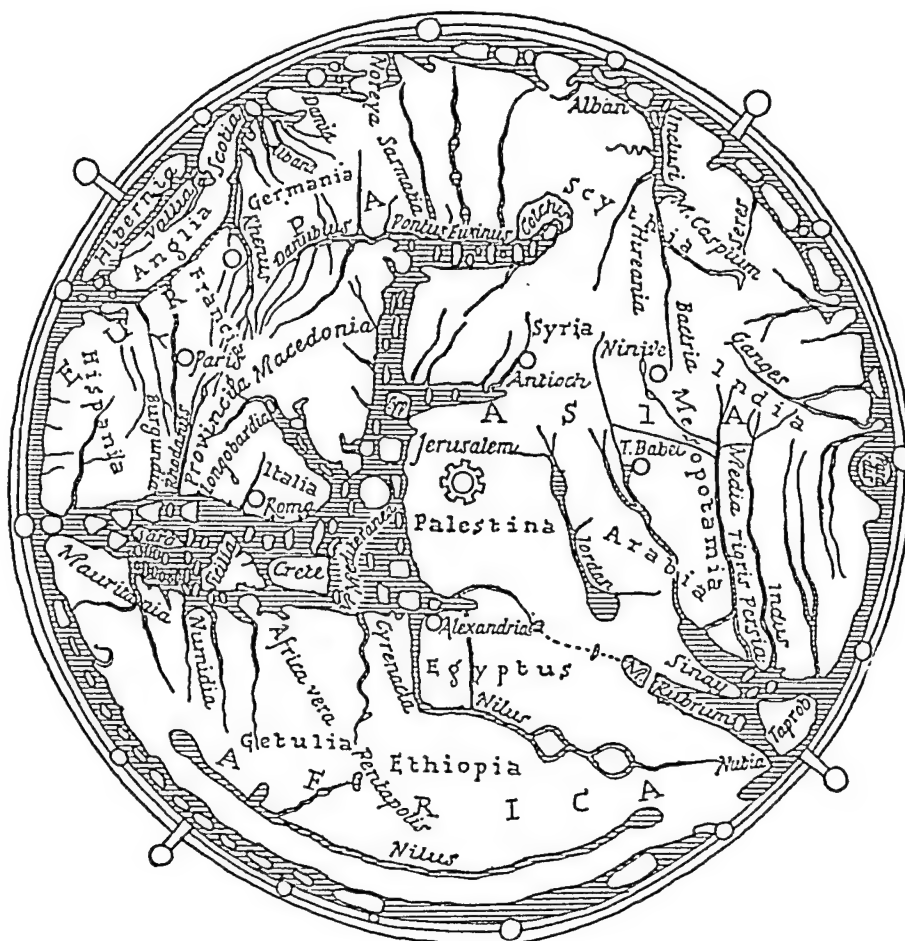
<sup>1</sup> For the first important age of science in England—the seventeenth century—see below, Chapter XXIV.

<sup>2</sup> See Chapter XIII.

<sup>3</sup> See Chapter XV.

New Learning which invited comparison between the present and the past; of the invention of printing which scattered and broadcast the new ideas; and again, of the growing idea of the Nation<sup>1</sup> and with it the supremacy of the State.

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter XIV, Section 1.



A medieval map, before the Age of Discovery: The Hereford Map (see opposite), drawn about 1280 (simplified). Compare this with Robert Thorne's map on p. 308.

# XIII

## TRADE AND DISCOVERY

### I. *East and West*

THE best way to understand the limitations of the medieval notions of the world is to look at a medieval map. There is one, of the thirteenth century, preserved in Hereford Cathedral—a round world drawn on a flat board. The land-mass is divided into the three continents of Asia, Europe, and Africa, and in the centre is Jerusalem. All round the outside edge runs the ocean—the farther limits of which were unknown. In this map the largest and most important sea is the Mediterranean, connecting the three continents of the Old World. The Red Sea and the Persian Gulf lead away to the Indies, vaguely known beyond. The British Isles therefore lay on the extreme edge of the medieval world; our ancestors sailed their ships eastwards to the Continent, not westwards into the unknown Atlantic. (See illustration opposite).

However, the barren Atlantic coast of the Sahara was well known to the Moors, who were masters of North Africa, and some time in the Middle Ages they discovered the Guinea coast. Somewhere on that coast was supposed to exist 'Bilad Ghana', or the 'Land of Wealth'. From this land the Christian traders of Europe were excluded by Moorish jealousy—but it was still possible to reach it by sea. Thus the Age of Discovery began, in the Middle Ages, with the coasting of the Atlantic shore of the Sahara first by the Genoese and then by the Portuguese, and with the latter's slave-raiding expeditions down the Guinea coast.<sup>1</sup>

By the fifteenth century, Portugal, situated (like England) on the edge of the known world, had taken the lead in maritime exploration under the direction of Prince Henry,<sup>2</sup> grandson of

<sup>1</sup> The name 'Bilad Ghana', or 'The Land of Wealth', appears on a map made by an Arab geographer (for Roger II, Norman King of Sicily) in 1150. The word 'Ghana' became known to the Genoese and Portuguese as 'Guinea'—the famous Guinea coast of West Africa.

<sup>2</sup> See above, Chapter XII, Sect. 6.

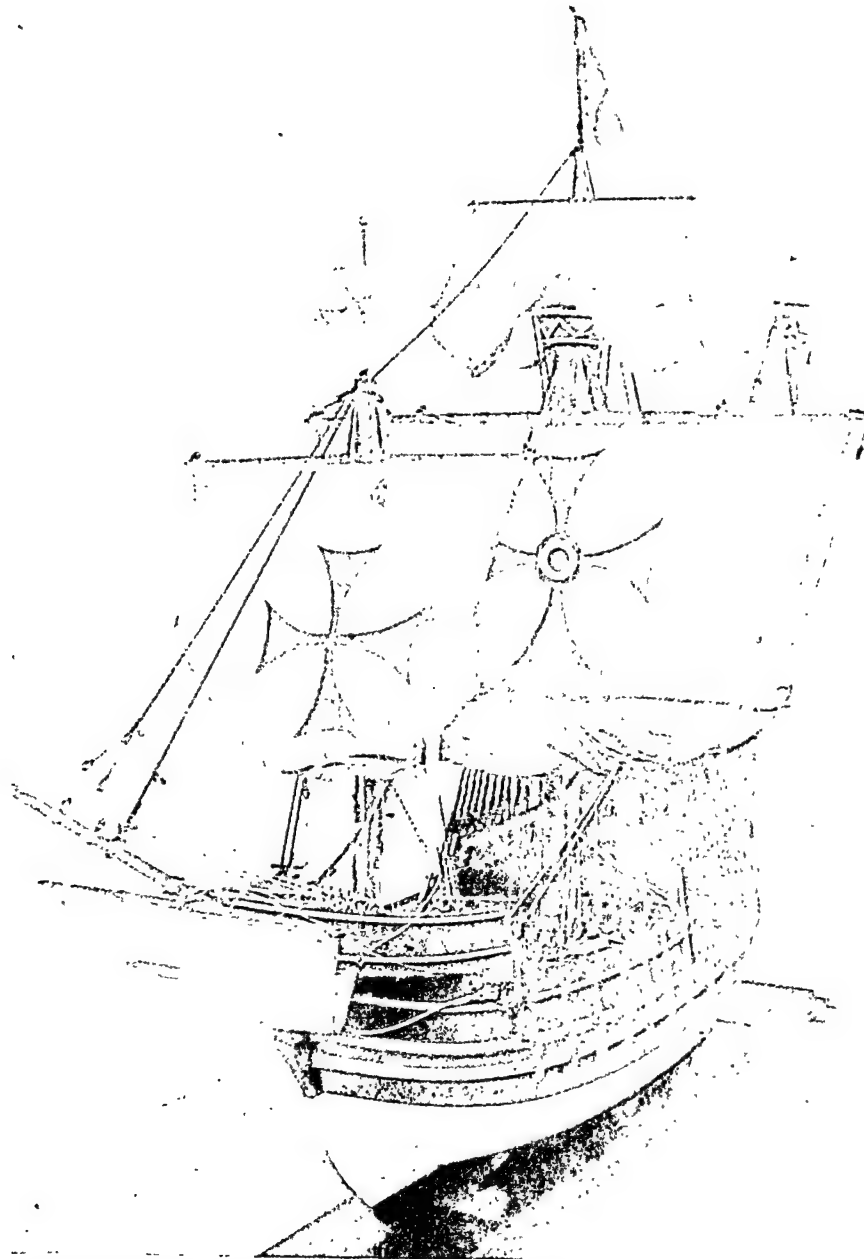
The Map

Portuguese  
Discoveries

John of Gaunt and later known as 'the Navigator'. Prince Henry took for his model the saintly Crusader of two centuries earlier, 'my lord St. Louis' (as he calls him in his will), for Henry, like St. Louis, was inspired with the prospect of converting the heathen of Africa to the Gospel. The Age of Discovery owed much to the influence of Roman Christianity; the spread of the Gospel—sometimes by forcible means—went hand in hand with discovery.

In due course the sailors of Portugal even ventured out into the Atlantic Ocean, which was at this time regarded with dread by European sailors. Some of the Azores and the Canaries had, however, already been discovered (fourteenth century); and among Prince Henry's earliest triumphs was the finding, by one of his mariners, of Madeira (1420). Each new point reached was a triumph for the keen watcher at Sagres (near Cape St. Vincent), where he had built an observatory and a school for navigators. His thoughts were then directed towards the gold- and slave-producing coasts of Guinea. In 1441 his sailors reached Cape Blanco, in 1445 the rivers Gambia and Senegal, and in 1446 the Cape Verde Islands. In 1460 Henry died, just before his sailors reached the Gulf of Guinea and opened up a rich trade in ivory, gold, and slaves. Then, for the next twenty-seven years (1460-87) Portuguese sailors searched for a sea passage to the East. At last Bartholomew Diaz was  
Diaz, 1487 blown round the Cape of Storms (1487), which his king renamed the Cape of Good Hope—the hope of opening trade with the Indies. Five years later three ships sailed from Spain on an even more momentous voyage.

Columbus Christopher Columbus was a Genoese sailor who had been from his youth in the Portuguese maritime service, had married a Portuguese wife, and had often been employed in the Guinea voyages; and he had sailed to Britain and even Iceland. For eighteen years he tried to persuade the rulers of Portugal and Spain to furnish him with ships for a voyage into the Atlantic. Columbus was strongly influenced by the work of Prince Henry, whose ideals were much the same as his own. Like Prince Henry, Columbus dreamed of planting the Cross in the realm of the Great Khan of Cathay, and of converting the millions of heathen to the faith of Christ. To all this he added



A model of Columbus' flagship, the *Santa Maria*, in South Kensington Museum. She was only 90 feet long by 20 broad

something of his own. He believed that he was inspired by Heaven to do a great work; and that it was his mission to cross the hitherto unexplored waters of the Atlantic. What he expected to find on the other side is something of a mystery—the man himself was something of a mystery. Perhaps he thought he would reach India—or Cathay and Zipangu (i.e. China and Japan). Perhaps—who knows?—he believed that through his agency God would reveal some fresh marvel to mankind.

It is certain that Columbus and other leading geographers of the fifteenth century believed the world to be a sphere, and that therefore China and India might be reached by sailing westward instead of labouring round Africa. In the very year of Columbus' great voyage (1492), the learned geographer Martin Behaim produced his *globe*, showing what he thought to be the distribution of land and sea in both hemispheres. A glance at the map made from this globe will reveal the fact that Behaim underestimated the distance between the Azores and Cathay. He was of course ignorant of the existence of America and of the Pacific Ocean!

Discovery  
of America  
1492

After long years of waiting, Columbus at last persuaded Isabella, Queen of Castile, to furnish him with three tiny ships. He set sail (3 August 1492) from Palos, near Cadiz, with a crew of 88 men, whose friends never expected to see them again. No words can do justice to the faith and perseverance of the great commander, without whose inspiration the crew of 'muttering shoalbrains' would never have dared to sail into the unknown. He revived their drooping spirits by making the most of such signs of land as they saw—floating rushes, land-birds flying, and so on. At last, nearly five weeks after the explorers had left the Canaries, at two o'clock in the morning of 12 October 1492, a sailor on board the *Pinta* reported land in sight.

Columbus landed on one of the Bahama Islands. He thought he had reached the Indies, as the name of the 'West Indies' reminds us to this day. He returned home by a northerly route, and passed the Azores with two battered ships—the third had been wrecked. He sailed up the Tagus in March 1493.

Columbus made three more voyages across the Atlantic, but he never found the desired passage to India. He died (1506)

after suffering many indignities at the hands of the Spanish authorities, for they meted out scant justice to the great man who, without knowing it, 'gave a New World to Spain', as his epitaph expressed it.

It was after Columbus returned from his second voyage of exploration (1496) that the long-desired African passage to India was discovered. Vasco da Gama, a Portuguese, following in the wake of Diaz, rounded the Cape of Good Hope, and at last reached Calicut in India (1498). A new route to the East was open.

Vasco da  
Gama  
1497-8

## 2. *Europe's Trade with the East*

The trade with the East was in those days closely concerned with the health and comfort of the people of Europe. There were then no root crops (turnips and swedes) with which to feed the cattle in winter months; therefore most of the cattle had to be killed off every autumn, and the people lived on salted meat until the following summer. To make such food more palatable, the spices of the East seemed a necessity—cloves and nutmegs from the Moluccas, pepper and ginger from Malabar, cinnamon from Ceylon, nutmegs from Amboyna. And it must be remembered that in those days men had to do without potatoes, without tea or coffee or chocolate, or tobacco.

The Spice  
Isles

The East was the source of all kinds of luxuries—of 'precious stones and pearls, and various drugs and spices', as Marco Polo had written long ago.

'Beyond the Bay of Bengal, near the Equator, there was opium, the only conqueror of pain then known; and in two small islands of the Moluccas, Ternate and Tidore, there was the clove tree, surpassing all plants in value. These were the real Spice Islands, the enchanted region which was the object of such passionate desire; and their produce was so cheap on the spot, so dear in the markets of Antwerp and London, as to constitute the most lucrative trade in the world. From these exotics, grown on volcanic soil, in the most generous of the tropical climates, the profit was such as they could be paid for in precious metals. . . . When Drake was at Ternate, he found the Sultan hung with chains of bullion, and clad in a robe of gold brocade thick enough to stand upright.'<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Acton, *Lectures on Modern History*.

Old and  
New Routes  
to the East

The lure of this rich and romantic trade was one of the motives that inspired the sailor of the Renaissance period to 'entrust his frail bark to the cruel ocean'. To reach the markets of Asia by sea was the aim of all the great discoverers—da Gama, Columbus, Cabot, Magellan, and others—and on the way they found Africa and a New World. The Portuguese, we have seen, first found a sea-way to the East. With da Gama's arrival at Calicut (1498) in India, they saw that they could capture the Indian Ocean trade from the Arabs. This caused the old overland trade with the East to decline.

The great commercial towns of medieval Europe, like Venice and Genoa, lost their supremacy as the new Atlantic trade-route superseded the old Mediterranean route leading to the caravan journey across Asia. The new route was less costly and risky than when rich cargoes had to be lifted from the backs of camels and pack-horses or carried in Chinese junks and Arab dhows. Incidentally, the caravan-route was made too dangerous by the Turkish advance, particularly after the conquest of Egypt by Sultan Selim I (1512-20). The European countries which benefited by the change were naturally those facing the Atlantic, first Portugal and Spain, and later, France, Holland, and England.

### 3. *The New World*

The momentous discoveries of a new route to the Old World of the East, and of a New World in the West, changed the course of history, and marked the transition from the crusading age to the age of commerce and colonization. Further marvelous advances in man's knowledge of the world were made in the short space of forty years between the first voyage of Columbus and the discovery of Peru (1492-1532)—when books about the great discoveries were (as Sir Thomas More tells us) 'in every man's hand'.

Spain and  
Portugal

With two exceptions,<sup>1</sup> all the fruits of discovery at first went to Spain and Portugal, who reaped the advantage of having been first on the scene. To prevent disputes between the two countries, Pope Alexander VI issued a Bull (1493), amicably dividing all the newly discovered lands between Spain and

<sup>1</sup> See next section, Cabot (England) and Cartier (France).



Portugal. A line was drawn 100 leagues west of the Azores; all lands west of this line were to go to Spain, all east of it to Portugal.<sup>1</sup> It was this Bull which gave the Spaniards a religious sanction for their conquest and conversion of the New World, and for their claim to monopolize its treasures—a claim which was afterwards contested by Elizabethan sailors.

Twenty years passed after Columbus' most famous voyage before the existence of the Pacific Ocean was revealed (1513).<sup>Exploration of America</sup> During that time the explorers who followed in his wake pushed north and south along the coasts of Central and South America in the hope of finding a passage to the East. For the results of Columbus' discovery were at first disappointing. Instead of the wealth and wonders of the East, which the Portuguese sailors had reached, the Spaniards had found only some islands and an unknown continent, peopled by brown-skinned 'Indians', some harmless, some savage, but all uncivilized. The islands were beautiful, it is true, and their beauty appealed to the fine nature of Columbus, who compared the birds and flowers of the West Indies with those of the gardens of Andalusia in the spring-time. But the successors of Columbus cared nothing for the beauties of the West Indies; they sought wealth, and they cruelly treated the poor natives. Later on, the Spaniards followed the miserable practice of the Portuguese in enslaving the negroes of West Africa, whom they shipped across the Atlantic, and worked as slaves on the West Indian sugar plantations.

Meanwhile, thousands of miles of the American coast line were being opened up. The north coast of South America, from Brazil to Panama (see map, p. 306), was explored by Pinzon (one of Columbus' captains) and others. A Portuguese named Cabral, who was blown out of his course to India westwards, came upon the eastern coast of Brazil, which he claimed for Portugal (1500). In the following year Amerigo Vespucci, a Florentine—whose Christian name was given to the new world as *America*—explored the 2,000 miles of coast farther south.

In 1513 Balboa,<sup>2</sup> a Spanish adventurer, first sighted the

<sup>1</sup> The next year, by the Treaty of Tordesillas, the line was moved farther west in Portugal's favour.

<sup>2</sup> Not, as Keats's sonnet says, 'stout Cortez'.

The Pacific discovered 1513 Pacific Ocean from a hill in Darien (Panama) and built a ship to sail on that unknown sea. Six years later Magellan sailed in the service of the King of Spain on a wonderful voyage, which linked up all the previous discoveries. He pushed right down the coast of South America until he found the tortuous and difficult passage—the Straits of Magellan—which led at last to the Pacific Ocean. He sailed right across that huge expanse of water till he came to the East Indies, where he discovered the Philippines.<sup>1</sup> Magellan was killed by natives in the Philippines, but his crew brought his ship home across the Indian Ocean, round the Cape of Good Hope, back to Spain (September 1522). This ship, the *Vittoria*, was the first to sail round the world.

Cortez In the same year that Magellan started on his famous voyage Cortez landed at Vera Cruz in the Gulf of Mexico. A few days' march inland he came upon the marvellous city of Mexico, built on an island in a lake. It was the capital of the Empire of the Aztecs, as the inhabitants of Mexico were called. The Aztecs were in many ways an advanced people, and they had a knowledge of the arts and crafts. The Spaniards were amazed by the magnificence of their buildings, and by the profusion of precious metals which they saw displayed on every side. But the Aztecs were degraded by the odious practice of human sacrifice, and the Spaniards considered that religion, no less than patriotism, demanded the conquest of the Aztec kingdom. After incredible adventures,<sup>2</sup> Cortez captured the city of Mexico (1521) and reduced the Aztec kingdom to a Spanish province.

Cortez was the first of the *Conquistadores*—the Spanish conquerors who built up Spain's overseas empire, men whose astonishing bravery and daring were matched only by their appalling ruthlessness and cruelty. The cruellest and most successful of these Spanish adventurers was Pizarro, the conqueror of Peru (1532), who, with a handful of men, overthrew the Empire of the Incas, a South American empire similar to that of the Aztecs in Mexico. Thenceforth the silver mines of Peru

<sup>1</sup> They were so named later on, after Philip II of Spain.

<sup>2</sup> Cortez made Montezuma, King of Mexico, his prisoner. The king was afterwards killed by his own people. See Rider Haggard's novel, *Montezuma's Daughter*.

unceasingly poured the precious metal into the coffers of Spain—and its distribution caused a dislocation in the economic life of Europe.<sup>1</sup>

The astounding success of the Spaniards in the West was matched by the rapid progress of the Portuguese in the East. The founder of the Portuguese Empire was Albuquerque, who was sent out (1509) as Viceroy of the East. He and the famous Jesuit missionary, St. Francis Xavier, became the heroes of a brilliant though shortlived empire. He made Goa<sup>2</sup> in India his headquarters, and shortly afterwards captured Malacca and the coveted Spice Islands. He made war on the Arabs, who had hitherto handled the trade of the Indian Ocean. Portuguese trading-posts were established at Mozambique and Madagascar, at Oman and Ormuz (in the Persian Gulf), in Ceylon, in the Spice Islands and Java. Trade was also begun with China (1517) and Japan (1542). The whole of the vast eastern trade went, year by year, round the Cape to Lisbon, which became the depot for the treasures of the East.

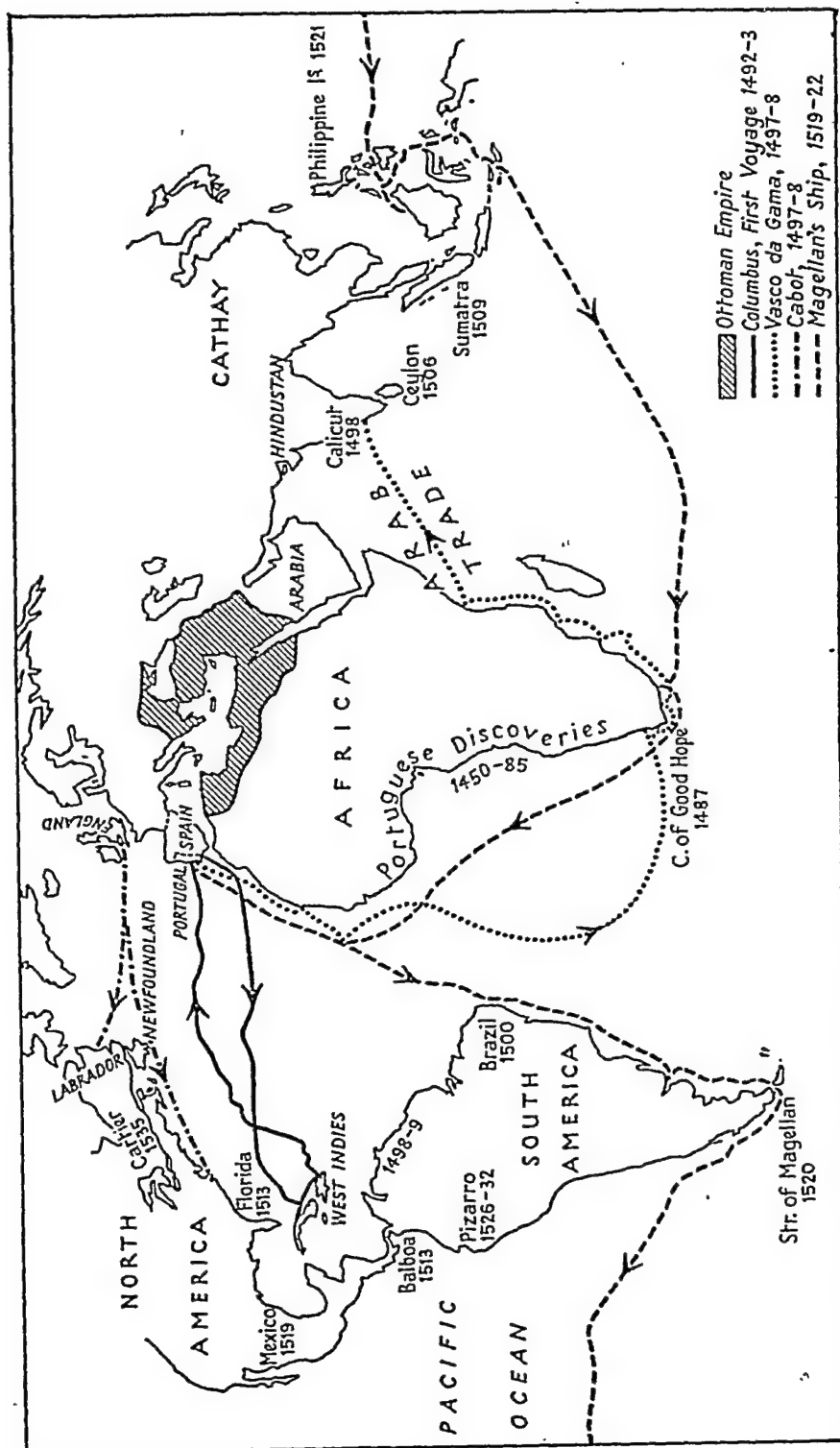
The Portu-  
guese  
Eastern  
Empire

#### 4. *North America: Cabot and Cartier*

The part played by England in the Age of Discovery seems small in comparison with the spectacular deeds of Spain and Portugal. While Henry VII was busy establishing order, the Portuguese were rounding the Cape and making a new way to the East, and Columbus was winning a new world for Spain. Henry VII, indeed, missed a great opportunity when Bartholomew Columbus, brother of the explorer, invited his assistance. Before Henry could make up his mind to accept the terms offered, Christopher Columbus had already sailed on his famous expedition in the Spanish service.

<sup>1</sup> It was not till the middle of the sixteenth century that other European countries became affected by the influx of silver into Spain. The total amount of money in Europe, it has been calculated, increased by 50 per cent. between 1491 and 1545, and it had quadrupled by 1600. Consequently English coinage had depreciated to one-seventh of its former value by the beginning of Elizabeth's reign. A rise in prices (as much as 100 per cent.) was the result—and unfortunately wages only rose by about 50 per cent. This was one of the causes of the social troubles of the time.

<sup>2</sup> Goa is still a Portuguese possession.



VOYAGES OF DISCOVERY, 1485-1535

But there was in England another Italian navigator, Genoese-born, like Columbus himself. This was Giovanni Caboto, better known as John Cabot, a man who had had some experience of the East, and had travelled on the caravan routes John Cabot through Central Asia to India. It was Cabot's belief that, although Columbus had failed to reach India by sailing south-west, the desired goal might be reached by sailing north-west instead; he thought that Cathay lay directly across the Atlantic.

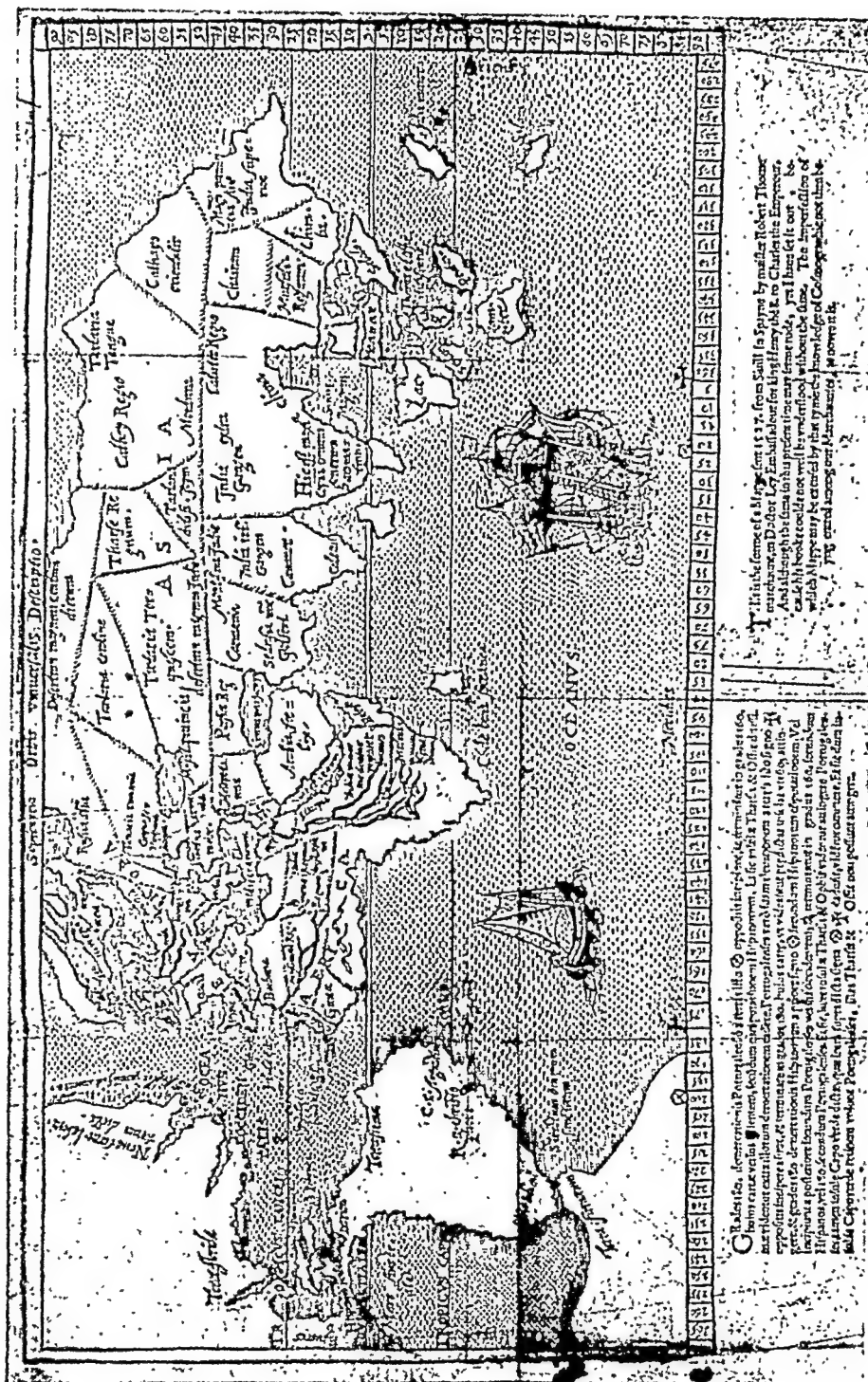
John Cabot petitioned Henry VII for permission to sail an English ship across the Atlantic to put this theory to the test. He set sail (1497) from Bristol in a small ship with a crew of seventeen. He crossed the Atlantic in safety, and landed on an unknown shore, which was probably *New-found-land*. He was struck by the immense quantity of fish which he saw in this region, but otherwise he found nothing of value. He returned to England the same summer. There was great excitement in Bristol and London when it was known that Cabot had actually found land. No one doubted that he had reached Cathay: that he had, in fact, succeeded where Columbus had failed. 'Master John Caboto expects to go on', says a contemporary writer, 'until he shall be over against an island, called by him Cipango (Japan), where he thinks all the spices in the world and also all the precious stones originate.'

These were high hopes; and Cabot set out on his second Second voyage, 1498 voyage (1498) with five ships laden with bales of English cloth to exchange for the silks of Cathay. But Cabot, of course, saw neither Chinese junks nor Indian palaces; the inhospitable coast of North America, with its wooded shores stretching for mile after mile without sign of human habitation, must have been a bitter disappointment. The explorer returned, and confessed failure. The merchants who had invested in the enterprise suffered loss, and the enthusiasm for the new 'Route to India' rapidly cooled off. John Cabot died shortly afterwards.

Nevertheless, some attempts were made during the next few years to find a North-West Passage to Cathay, notably by Sebastian Cabot, son of John, who (1509) explored the coast of Labrador. The chief result of the discovery of New-foundland and Labrador was the opening of the cod fishery

His first  
voyage to  
N. America  
1497

Sebastian,  
Cabot, 1509



ROBERT THORNE'S MAP OF THE WESTERN WORLD, 1527

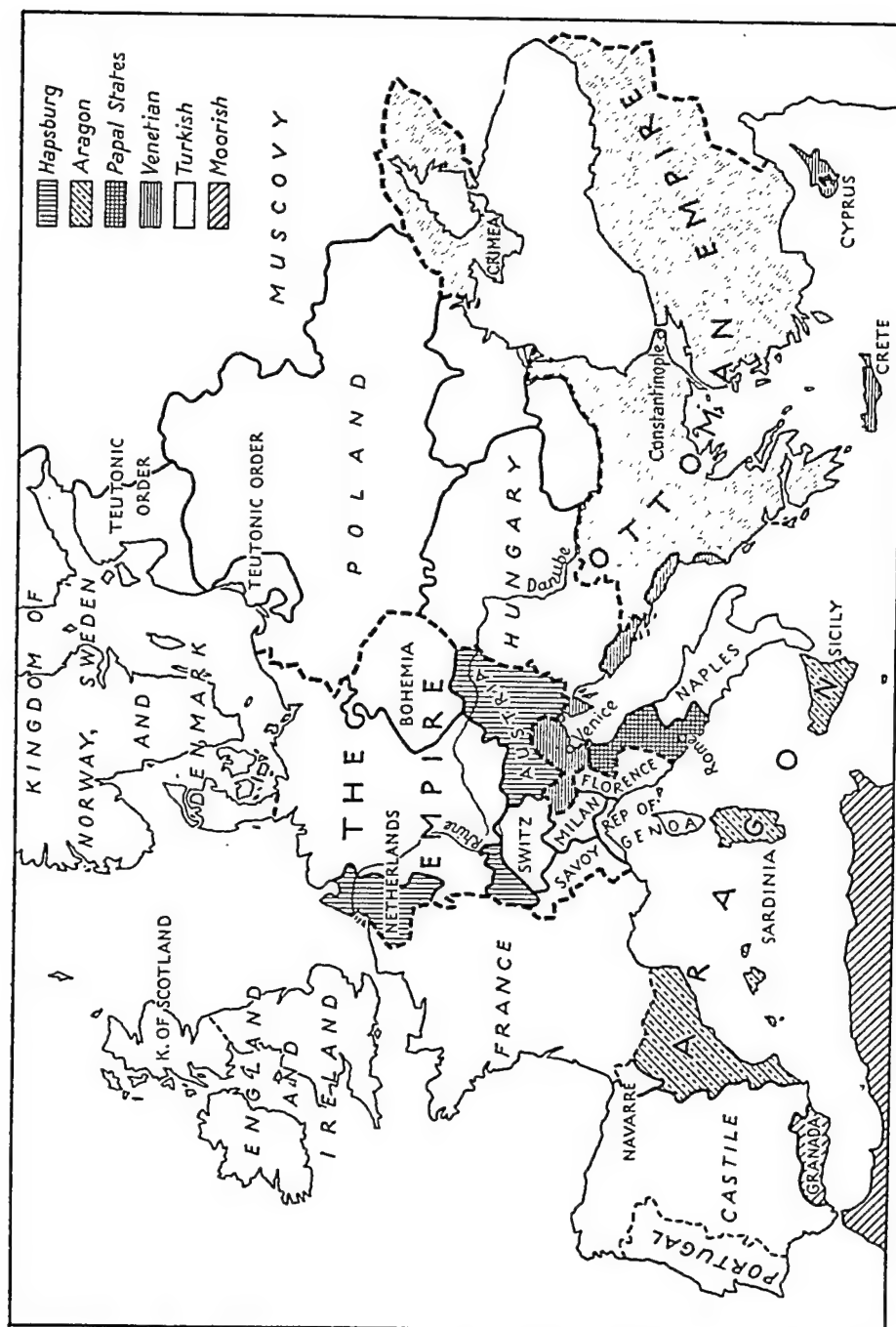
Contrast this with the medieval map on p. 296.

there, which was resorted to by both French and English fishermen, whose conflicts with each other in those fishing grounds were precursors of the long struggle that was to come between France and England in the New World.

Nearly twenty years after Cabot's voyage, Robert Thorne,<sup>1</sup> Robert Thorne son of a Bristol merchant, wrote a book called *A Declaration of the Indies*, which he sent to Henry VIII (1527). In this book Thorne urged the probable advantages—as he thought—of a North-West Passage to Asia, which he said would be a shorter route than that by the Cape or the Straits of Magellan. He also argued that, since the tropical regions had not proved too hot for Europeans, the Arctic would not prove too cold. One result of Thorne's *Declaration* was the sending of an expedition to the north-west in the same year, under John Rut, a master John Rut 1527 mariner of the Navy. Rut was turned back by the ice-fields in the north, but he then sailed south down the shores of America till he came to the West Indies. At Santo Domingo the Spaniards fired on his ship—a foretaste of the reception which English sailors experienced in Spanish waters in the days of Elizabeth.

But if the earliest efforts in the New World were disappointing, the work of men like the Cabots prepared the way for subsequent events which led to North America becoming an English-speaking continent. Nevertheless, the French were the first to colonize this part of the world. Jacques Cartier, Jacques Cartier the discoverer of Canada, was a French sailor, born at St. Malo, in Brittany. He made four voyages to the north-west, in the first of which he discovered (1534) the Gulf of St. Lawrence. Canada 1534 On his second voyage he sailed right up the great river, which he named the St. Lawrence (1536). He came into contact with the native 'Red Indians', from one of whom he heard the name Kanata or Canada—really the Indian name for a village. Cartier made two more voyages in the same locality. But it was not till the beginning of the next century that Champlain founded (1608) the first French colony—Quebec—on the banks of the St. Lawrence.

<sup>1</sup> Thorne was the first Englishman to write a book on exploration. For his map of the world, see illustration opposite.



EUROPE IN 1490



## XIV

### THE NEW MONARCHIES

#### I. *The Rise of National States*

One of the most characteristic of the ideas of the Age of the Renaissance was that of the Nation and its sovereign independence—an idea still very active in our own days. The Middle Ages had been dominated by the Catholic ideal of world unity. The great institutions of those ages were international—for example, the Feudal System,<sup>1</sup> and above all the Church and the Papacy. Latin, too, was an international language; and though the various peoples had their own languages, the continual use of Latin in both Church and State affairs helped educated men to regard themselves as members of one society, the society of Christendom. Above all, these peoples—English, French, Spanish, Italian, German—were all members of one Church. All belonged in some measure to the Christendom of which the heads were the Pope and the Emperor. Then, gradually, from the early days of the Renaissance, the newer idea of the 'Nation' took root, and this in time changed the unity of 'Christendom' into the disunion of 'Europe'. For modern Europe is dominated by national feeling and is divided into independent national states; and these have no longer even the common bond of one Church.

Europe has lost as well as gained by the disappearance of medieval Christendom. She has gained, because the old feudal divisions in most countries meant internal disunion, civil warfare, and baronial tyranny. But Europe has also lost, because the old ideal of a united Christendom has disappeared in the jealous rivalries of warring nations. From time to time attempts have been made to check these dangerous rivalries. But the problem of international peace and co-operation—of

<sup>1</sup> Note, however, that town-life, which developed greatly from the thirteenth century onwards, became anti-feudal in tendency. The development of the town helped the growth of a commercial spirit—a fact which contributed in no small degree towards the making of a new type of society.

a 'society of nations'—is one which mankind is still trying to solve in a satisfactory manner.

The nations which took the lead in Europe in the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries were those that first achieved national unity, and the chief of these were France, Spain, and England. Italy, which had given so much to the world in art and letters, did not share in this political change. Great men lived in Italy—in Rome, Florence, Venice, Naples, and Milan—but all these cities were the capitals of small states. In a word, Italy was not a nation; hence she became (from 1494) the prey of powerful neighbours. As with Italy, so with Germany. The Holy Roman Empire was an empire only in name; in practice, Germany contained three or four hundred separate States. Both Germany and Italy retained, until even the nineteenth century, their internal divisions and discords.

These facts must ever be borne in mind in the study of modern history. France, Spain, and England had achieved national unity in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, whereas Germany and Italy had to wait another three centuries—and some of our problems to-day are due to the fact that they are still comparatively new nations.

**Monarchy** The means by which national unity was brought about in France, Spain, and England was the monarchy. It was their kings who saved and made these countries—saved them from feudal anarchy and made them into nations. It was monarchs like Henry VII and Henry VIII of England, Louis XI and Francis I of France, and Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain who united their countries under a strong rule, and led them to a great destiny. A Holy Roman Emperor (Maximilian) contrasted the new monarchs with himself as follows: 'The Emperor is indeed a king of kings, for no one feels bound to obey him; and the King of Spain is a king of men, for, though resisted, he is still obeyed; but the King of France is a king of beasts, for him none dare gainsay.'

The Age of the Renaissance was, in many respects, an age of intellectual liberty; but it certainly was not an age of political liberty. On the contrary, in many countries this was an age of despots. The petty states of Italy, enlightened as they were

in so many ways, were mostly governed by tyrants, such as the Medici in Florence, the cruel Visconti in Milan, and Caesar Borgia in central Italy.

The generation which produced Michelangelo and Raphael also produced Machiavelli, the 'demon of politics'. This man <sup>Machiavelli</sup> saw the results of the French invasion of his country. All his life he dreamed of the union of Italy, and he wrote a book—*The Prince*—bearing on this problem. His book is a pitiless analysis of the methods by which an ambitious man, like Caesar Borgia, rises to sovereign power. Machiavelli regarded the people (as distinct from nobles and clergy) as the very fibre of nations; yet they, with their commerce and comforts, their arts and pleasures, were to be as wax in the hands of politicians. He forgot that men are more than political beings. In his most un-Christian treatise, lying, fraud, cruelty, and murder are all held to be justified so long as the crime, whatever it is, is committed in the interests of the State. But it was this book which founded the science of politics for the modern world.

Under Henry VIII, the most powerful of the kings of England, some of Machiavelli's maxims were put into practice, and Thomas Cromwell, the 'Hammer of the Monks,'<sup>1</sup> had learnt his methods in Italy itself. But there were other Renaissance thinkers who saw better ways of governing the State. Erasmus in his *Christian Prince* urged that there should be no distinction between political and Christian morality. Sir Thomas More made his Utopians elect both their king and his council, though he confessed that 'there are many things in the commonwealth of Utopia that I rather wish than hope to see adopted in our own'.

## 2. Henry VII and the Tudor Monarchy

### (i) *The Establishment of Order*

When Henry VII came to the throne, the English had long been one people; what they needed was one government. <sup>Lack of governance</sup> This they could obtain only when the king resumed those feudal powers long exercised by barons and others; and this was the essence of the New Monarchy in England. The 'lack of

<sup>1</sup> See below, p. 348.

governance' during the Wars of the Roses was followed by the efficient despotism of the Tudors. But the Tudors were popular despots, for their power was based on the consent, not on the servitude, of the people. Their work was sternly to establish order once and for all; and in asserting the royal will over both State and Church, they were wise enough to use Parliament to keep them in touch with the people.

England, 'bound in with the triumphant sea', is a country which it is comparatively easy to unite under one rule; and she has been spared the worst evils of disunion which have, at different times, afflicted almost all continental countries. But the appearance of unity which England presented under medieval kings, like Edward I or Edward III, was always in danger of collapsing before the forces of feudalism; for the feudal monarchy worked well only when the king was strong enough to control the barons. Henry V, who led a national English army to victory at Agincourt (1415), was the last medieval king to keep his barons in order. After his death, the long dismal reign of his son, Henry VI (1422-61), saw England plunged into the struggle of rival factions which ended in civil war.

The country was tired of this chaotic state of affairs. For more than sixty years (1422-85)—if we except the latter half of the reign of Edward IV—there had been no government worthy of the name. The blessings of peace and order were consequently lacking. These facts must be borne in mind in order to realize what it was that the Tudors achieved. They gave England internal order and peace, and saved it from civil war in their time.

Henry VII  
1485-1509

The significance of the battle of Bosworth (1485), then, is that it ended the 'lack of governance' by putting a strong king on the throne. Henry Tudor, Earl of Richmond, landed in Wales on a doubtful enterprise, crossed England, and fought the king, Richard III, whose crimes had made his subjects detest him. Richard was killed; and the Tudor was hailed king as Henry VII.

The Tudors were a family which had only recently risen to prominence. The founder of the family fortunes was Owen Twydder or Tudor, a Welsh knight, who married Catherine of

France, widow of Henry V. Owen's two sons, Edmund and Jasper, were made Earls of Richmond and Pembroke, respectively, by their half-brother, Henry VI. Edmund Tudor married Lady Margaret Beaufort, daughter of the Duke of Somerset; their only son was Henry Tudor, the victor of Bosworth.

Henry VII's claim to the throne, though not very strong, was fourfold—conquest, Parliament's declaration, the Pope's confirmation, and descent from John of Gaunt, third son of Edward III.<sup>1</sup> By descent young Edward Plantagenet, Earl of Warwick (the son of Clarence, brother of Edward IV) was the rightful King of England. He was the only surviving male Plantagenet with an unbroken legitimate descent from Edward III. But the difference between Edward Plantagenet and Henry Tudor was this: Henry was sitting at Westminster wearing the Crown of England (which he had picked up from a hawthorn bush on Bosworth Field); Edward was a close prisoner in the Tower of London.

The battle of Bosworth was won in August (1485); Henry VII was crowned in November. In the following January he married Elizabeth of York, eldest daughter of Edward IV, and thus brought about the union of the Red and White Rose. By this he hoped that Yorkist feeling would be pacified, but he was mistaken. The Yorkist cause found a redoubtable champion in Margaret, Duchess of Burgundy, sister of Edward IV. At the Burgundian court all Yorkist exiles found a welcome. The first attempt to overthrow Henry VII was made (1487) by setting up a pretender, one Lambert Simnel, a baker's son, claiming to be the Earl of Warwick, who actually was in the Tower. Besides Flanders (ruled by the Duke of Burgundy), Ireland gave a welcome to pretenders; and Simnel was crowned king of England at Dublin. When he landed in England he was joined by John de la Pole, Earl of Lincoln (a nephew of Edward IV), and by other Yorkists. At the battle (1487) of Stoke (near Newark), Lincoln was slain. This was the last battle of the Wars of the Roses, and it was fought just a hundred years after the first act in the tragedy of the Roses, the rising of the Appellants against Richard II.<sup>2</sup> Simnel was

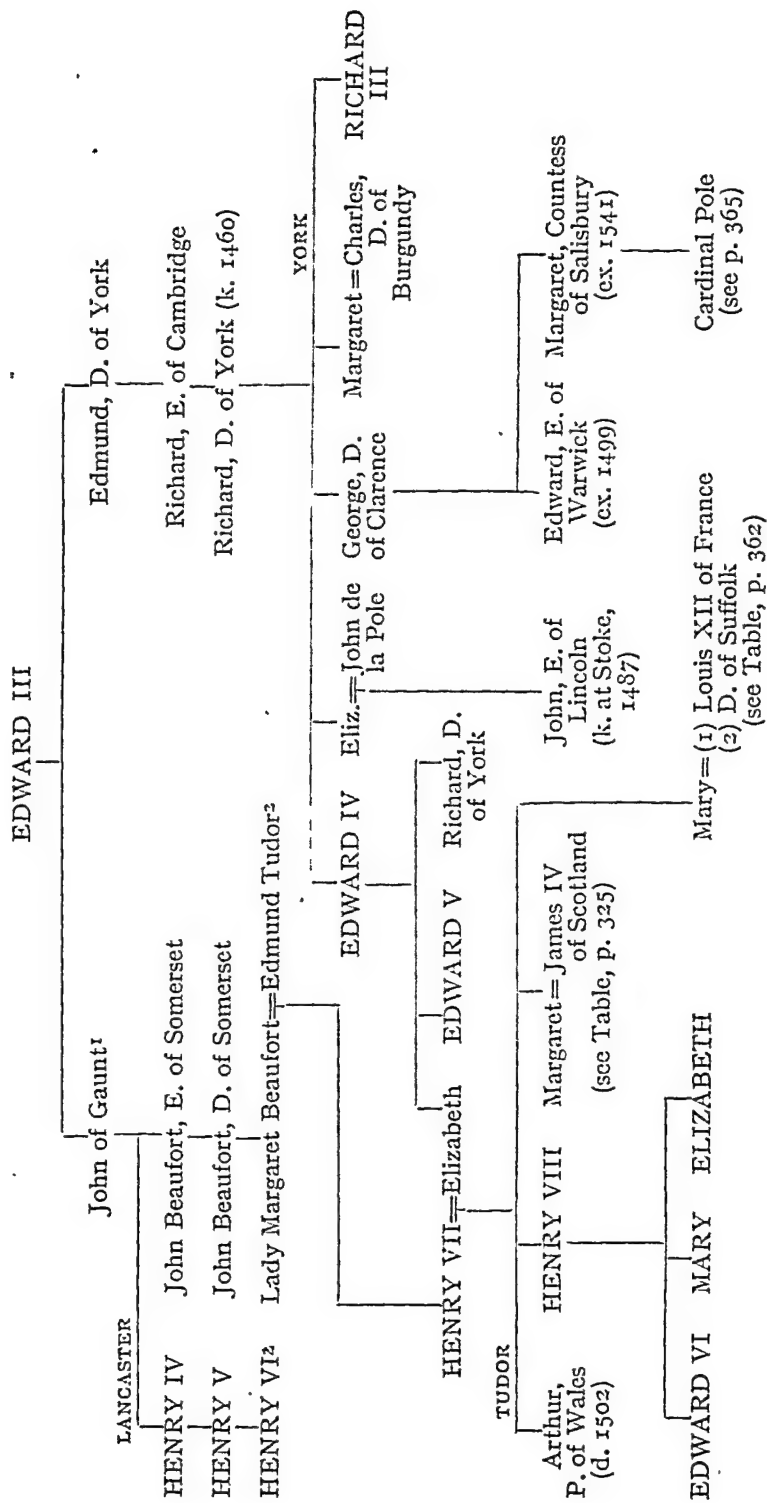
Marriage of  
Henry VII  
1485

Revolts  
against his  
rule  
1487-99

<sup>1</sup> See Table, p. 316.

<sup>2</sup> See above, Chapter XI, Section 4.

# THE HOUSES OF LANCASTER, YORK, AND TUDOR



¹ For Table showing, more fully, the family of John of Gaunt, see above, p. 272.

² Sons of Catherine of France. See p. 315.

taken prisoner, and to show his contempt for him Henry employed him in the royal kitchens.

The Yorkists then found another pretender, a Flemish Jew <sup>Warbeck and Warwick</sup> named Perkin Warbeck, who claimed to be Richard, Duke of York, brother of Edward V, alleging that he had escaped when his brother was murdered. Warbeck gave Henry some anxiety for nearly a dozen years. He visited in turn most of Henry's enemies—first Flanders, then Ireland, and afterwards Scotland. James IV, who was not yet on good terms with Henry, gave him a Scottish wife. At last he landed in England (1497), but on doing so was promptly seized and brought before the king. After two years' imprisonment he was executed on a further charge of conspiracy. With him perished the young and innocent Earl of Warwick, who was condemned on a trumped-up charge, and sent to a cruel and quite unmerited death (1499). Henry, who was then negotiating a marriage between his elder son Arthur and the daughter of the King of Spain,<sup>1</sup> wanted Warwick out of the way because the Spaniards were nervous of Yorkist claimants to the Tudor throne. The blameless Warwick's only crime was that he was the last direct male representative of the Plantagenet kings of England.

The policy of Henry VII throughout his reign was to depress <sup>Henry and the nobility</sup> the feudal nobility. He was well aware that it was the existence of over-mighty subjects that had brought the Lancastrian monarchy to ruin. Fortunately for the Tudor monarchy the Wars of the Roses had considerably weakened the ranks of the old baronage. Nor did Henry VII allow its members to regain their former influence over national affairs; only two members of the old nobility—the Earls of Oxford and Surrey—occupied high places in the royal councils. For the rest, Henry VII chose for his ministers (as Henry II and Edward I had done) churchmen like Archbishop Morton, and lawyers who were often men of humble birth. The House of Commons supported the king in the measures he took to end the feudal anarchy of the previous century. Herein lies the secret of the popularity of the Tudor monarchs and of the success of their despotism.

The causes which tended to create the New Monarchy in

<sup>1</sup> See below, p. 324.

England had been operative for some time. The three other powers which had made themselves felt in English politics had all declined. First, the ranks of the baronage had been thinned by battle, murder, and execution during the Wars of the Roses; moreover, they had suffered heavily from fines and had had to sell their lands to pay for the wars. Second, the Church had become discredited: the clergy had lost much of their influence as early as the reign of Edward III, and they had abused the power that fell to them at the time of the Lancastrian Revolution. Third, Parliament had attempted to play a leading part in the government and had failed; and the victory of the Yorkists under Edward IV showed that the time was not yet ripe for constitutional rule. Thus the only power which could govern was the Crown. To the Crown was allied the new middle-class, which had risen in importance as the baronage declined. The growth of trade, particularly the cloth trade, was responsible for the making of many mercantile fortunes in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. In the course of time this 'middle-class' of Henry VII's day became the 'aristocracy' of later centuries; for the wealthy traders bought land from the older, and now impoverished, nobility. The Tudors, in fact, not only swept away the old governing class but founded a new one, whose prosperity depended on the Tudor peace.

The Crown  
and the new  
middle-  
class

One of the instruments by which Henry VII kept the barons in order was the Court of the Star Chamber. This was a special committee<sup>1</sup> (re-modelled in 1487) of the King's Council (or Privy Council)—as we are reminded by Justice Shallow's words when he complained that Falstaff had trespassed on his estate: 'I will make a Star Chamber matter of it. . . . The Council shall hear of it.'<sup>2</sup> The Star Chamber's special function was to deal with the most crying evils of the time. It judged offences to which the feudal nobles were most prone—keeping liveried retainers and 'maintaining' their followers' causes in

Star  
Chamber

<sup>1</sup> It consisted of the Chancellor, the Treasurer, the keeper of the Privy Seal, a bishop, a peer, and two of the Justices. It did not become entirely distinct from the Council till in 1540 the Privy Council and Star Chamber got their separate clerks.

<sup>2</sup> Shakespeare, *Merry Wives of Windsor*, Act I, Scene 1.



the courts by frightening juries, i.e. the two offences known as 'Livery' and 'Maintenance'. By the agency of the Star Chamber Court, Henry restored the supremacy of the central government, and punished, with enormous fines,<sup>1</sup> those who dared to infringe his laws. At the same time Henry revived two other special courts—the Council of the North and the Council of Wales—to deal with disturbances in the most distant portions of his kingdom.

Henry VII was thrifty by nature, and he accumulated a large treasure, of which not a little came from the fines imposed by the Star Chamber. Towards the end of his reign, he employed two lawyers, named Empson and Dudley. These 'ravening wolves' used every means which ingenuity could devise to extort money from the king's subjects and to enrich their master. The city of London had to pay heavily to have its liberties confirmed (1505). Sir William Capell, a former Lord Mayor of London, was 'put on examination by the suit of the king for things done by him in the time of his mayoralty', fined £2,000, and sent to the Tower. The smallest infraction of the law was punished by heavy fines, and no man could feel safe from the king's agents. Henry VII encouraged these odious methods, for he specially desired to secure his throne against poverty—hence his so-called avarice. But his was not a reign of blood. Henry preferred money.

#### (ii) *Commercial and Foreign Policy*

The Tudors did much to mould the destiny of England by their commercial policy. The first of the Tudors was himself an

<sup>1</sup> There is a well-known story which illustrates the king's methods. He had paid a visit to the wealthy Earl of Oxford, whose retainers, wearing the earl's livery, waited upon the king to do him honour. 'The king called the earl to him, and said: "My lord, I have heard much of your hospitality, but I see it is greater than the speech. These handsome gentlemen and yeomen, whom I see on both sides of me, are surely your menial servants?" The earl smiled and said: "May it please your Grace, that were not for mine ease; they are most of them my retainers, that are come to do me service at such a time as this, and chiefly to see your Grace." The king started a little, and said: "By my faith, my lord, I thank you for your good cheer, but I may not endure to have my laws broken in my sight; my lawyer must speak with you". And the earl had to pay a heavy fine.

astute man of business. 'He could not endure to see trade sick', wrote Francis Bacon, his biographer. He worked hard to promote the interests of his merchants and traders and so to increase the wealth and power of the country. Before his time, it was mainly foreign ships and foreign merchants that carried away English wool and half-made cloth and brought back European and eastern goods. Henry VII's policy sought to develop the two main industries of cloth-working and shipping, which remained the basis of our wealth till the nineteenth century.

Navigation  
Act, 1485

In order to build up a Merchant Navy, he made a new Navigation Act (1485), which ordained that the Bordeaux wines brought to this country were to be carried only in English ships, manned by English, Irish, or Welsh sailors. He also aimed a blow at the Hansa—the powerful league of German towns that controlled the trade of the North Sea and the Baltic<sup>1</sup>—by making commercial treaties with the port of Riga and with Denmark to give English ships access to the Baltic trade. The later Tudors gradually crippled the Hansa's hold on England, and then at last England became commercially an independent country.

Further, Henry VII made commercial treaties with the Italian States, to encourage English ships to trade in the Mediterranean. Hitherto Venetian galleys and Genoese carracks had been almost the only carriers of goods to England from the Mediterranean. Now, for the first time, English traders began to make regular voyages to the distant Levant—then an enterprise of great danger and difficulty because of the Barbary pirates—and to trade in the spices of the East. This Levant voyage was the first really long trade-route of the English, and it became the route that the Suez Canal was in due course to make the chief artery of empire.

The Navy

Thus Henry VII won for Englishmen the right to carry their wares in English ships wherever they wished. We have seen, too, how he encouraged the Cabots in their ocean voyages. Nor did the king's activity stop here. He caused to be built, at his own expense, several fine ships for use in war or trade, which exceeded in size any hitherto seen in English harbours. Henry

<sup>1</sup> See above, Chapter XII.

VIII<sup>1</sup> continued his father's work and together they laid the basis of England's sea-power.

Besides developing shipping Henry VII did much to encourage the trade in English woollen cloth, for which there was a great demand abroad. The trading company known as the Merchant Adventurers were the chief cloth-exporters; and their trade in cloth had increased ten times in volume since Edward III's time. This meant an increasing demand for wool, which led to further enclosures of ploughland into sheep-runs. But sheep-grazing needs fewer labourers than arable farming, and so these enclosures caused serious unemployment among ploughmen. Tudor statesmen—especially Sir Thomas More, and Somerset<sup>2</sup>—were much concerned about this problem of enclosures, and it played a part in almost every insurrection of Tudor times.

Henry found the prosperity of the Merchant Adventurers endangered by the enmity of the Duchess Margaret, the Yorkist princess and harbourer of Yorkist pretenders. He therefore moved their staple, or chief market, from Antwerp to Calais, and this soon brought the Flemish to reason. Then Henry made the commercial treaty known as 'Magnus Intercursus' (1496), or The Great Intercourse, by which he obtained a free market 'without pass or licence' for English cloth in Flanders.

By making England more self-supporting in her cloth and shipping industries Henry VII made her independent and more powerful. He and his successors thus strengthened in England what later became known as the *Mercantile System*, which aimed at making a country rich and powerful by regulating its trade. By this system each country tried to make itself self-sufficient, by exporting the utmost possible quantity of its own goods, and importing as little as possible of the goods of other countries—receiving the difference of the two values in gold and silver (to which undue importance was attached). Hence a succession of corn laws, navigation acts, tariffs, and colonial trade regulations<sup>3</sup>—all designed to encourage home industries and check foreign competition. This system began

<sup>1</sup> See below, p. 330.

<sup>2</sup> See below, pp. 336 and 358.

<sup>3</sup> See Chapter XXII, § 3, 'The Mercantile Empire under Charles II'.

to develop towards the close of the Middle Ages,<sup>1</sup> and in England it lasted for five hundred years, until 'free trade' was adopted in Victoria's reign. It is still practised by many foreign states and it shows signs of revival in Britain.

In his dealings with foreign countries, and with the one  
 Ireland English dependency, Ireland, Henry showed his usual foresight. To Ireland he sent Sir Edward Poynings, a member of the Privy Council, who restored order in that ill-governed country. He induced the Irish Parliament, which met at Drogheda (1494), to pass a series of Acts (known as Poynings' Laws) by which Irish legislation was made dependent on England.<sup>2</sup> With Scotland, Henry negotiated a royal marriage, designed to promote peace between the two countries and destined in due course to unite the two Crowns. Henry's eldest daughter, Margaret, was wedded to the King of Scots, James IV (1502); and from that marriage came the Stuarts  
 Scottish marriage  
 1502 of English history.

Henry VII was, as has been seen, a man of peace. His one and only foreign war was of short duration, and not notable for military glory. Charles VIII of France was engaged in subduing the hitherto independent duchy of Brittany—an object which Henry wished to prevent. He therefore induced Parliament to grant him a large sum of money to invade France; he landed and besieged Boulogne; then he accepted an even larger sum from Charles VIII to make peace and return home (Treaty of Étaples, 1492). Henry took no further part in continental wars, but left the Frenchmen and Spaniards to cut each other's throats in Italy.

In Henry VII's time England first began to rank with the Great Powers that were now arising in Europe—France, Spain, and the Hapsburg Empire. These three Powers were bent on the conquest of Italy, whose petty States made it a prey to the invader—and invaded it was by Charles VIII of France in

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter XII, § 5, 'Trade in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries'.

<sup>2</sup> The following is a summary of Poynings' Laws: (1) The Irish Parliament could not be summoned without the king's consent. (2) It could discuss no Bill without the king's approval. (3) Its laws could be overridden by those passed at Westminster.



THE WOOL TRADE (*see p. 321*)  
Sheep-shearing on a fifteenth-century farm. (From a MS. in the British  
Museum.)

1494. All three Powers sought the friendship of Henry VII. It was in this way that England became involved in a system of dynastic marriages, i.e. marriages between royal houses by which monarchs built up great inheritances and treated countries as though they were family estates.

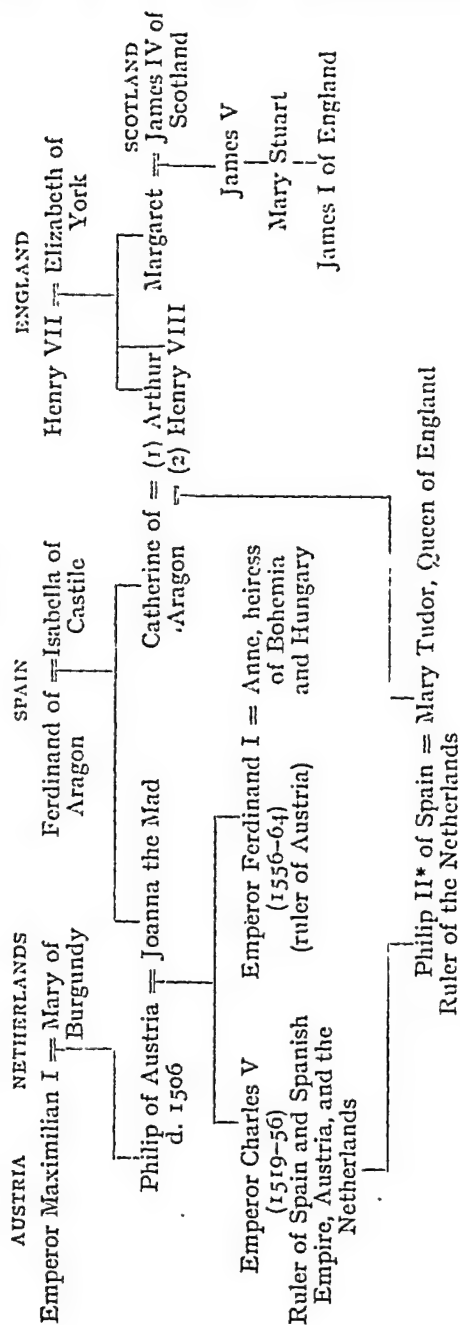
Spain First had come the Spanish marriage (1469) of Ferdinand and Isabella by which their two kingdoms of Aragon and Castile were united; of this marriage there were two daughters, Joanna and Catherine. Secondly, there was the marriage (1477) of Maximilian I, by which the Austrian Hapsburgs obtained the Burgundian lands including the Netherlands; and of this marriage there was a son, Philip the Fair. Thirdly, in Henry VII's time, there was the Austrian-Spanish marriage (1496), by which the Austrian Philip the Fair married the Spanish Joanna; and they had a son, Charles. This Charles in due course became Emperor (1519), and he inherited all the vast lands of his four grandparents.<sup>1</sup> Thus royal marriages were of great importance, for upon them hung the history of Europe in the Tudor Age. (See Table opposite.)

Marriage  
of Prince  
Arthur, 1501

What prize was Henry VII to have as the price of his friendship? An Anglo-Spanish marriage was arranged; Henry's elder son Arthur was betrothed to Catherine of Aragon. This marriage did not actually take place for some years, partly because the kings haggled for a long time over the dowry. 'No sharp-witted, close-fisted huckster chaffering his wares at a country fair could have shown a keener desire to save a half-penny than the King of England, and no peasants who ever drove their cart to market were more sharp-witted and close-fisted than the King and Queen of Spain.'<sup>2</sup> The marriage at last took place (1501); five months afterwards Prince Arthur died. Henry VII, anxious not to lose Catherine's dowry, then suggested that the princess should be betrothed to his younger son Henry, now Prince of Wales. A papal dispensation was obtained (1503), for without it a man could not marry his brother's widow. This marriage, so ominous for the course of English history, did not, however, take place in Henry VII's lifetime. The king died in 1509, and was buried in the beautiful Italian tomb in his Chapel at Westminster Abbey.

<sup>1</sup> See below, p. 329.      <sup>2</sup> *Pol. Hist. Eng.* v (H. A. L. Fisher).

## THE DYNASTIC MARRIAGES



\* Note: Philip II inherited all the Hapsburg lands except those in Austria and Germany, which went to his uncle Ferdinand, who also became Emperor.

3. *Henry VIII, Wolsey, and Europe*

Henry VIII  
1509-47 The accession of Henry VIII (1509) was hailed with joy in England. The young king was eighteen years old, well-educated, of fine physique, an adept at sports, and apparently good-natured. Few if any men saw in this handsome, sport-loving boy the signs of his future development. The keen intellect and the ruthless, unbending will were alike hidden from those who observed the king in his youth. And, indeed, the legend of 'Bluff King Hal' has been preserved to this day. But whoever has stood before Holbein's portrait of Henry, and noted the cold eyes staring from the heavy face, and seen that small, cruel mouth, has seen Henry VIII as he was in life.

Henry's first action on ascending the throne was a popular one. His father's hated ministers, Empson and Dudley,<sup>1</sup> were arrested on the day of his accession; they were tried for treason and executed. In June the king married Catherine of Aragon. Two years later the queen gave birth to a son, who did not live a month.

The first twenty years (1509-29) of Henry's reign, when Wolsey was his chief minister, were concerned largely with foreign affairs. Since 1494 Italy had been the cockpit of Europe, and there the armies of France and Spain fought for the mastery of the peninsula. Though Wolsey attempted much, England could do little to affect the result.

Henry and France Two years after Henry VIII's accession, the warlike Pope, Julius II, formed the Holy League (1511) with Spain to check the French advance in Italy. Henry VIII also joined it, in the hope of recovering the lost English province of Gascony. In this manner the king turned his mind to that old idle dream of a continental empire, though Dean Colet and others among his subjects dared to protest against this folly. Henry's first expedition against France was a complete failure. The second was commanded by the king in person. He landed at Calais, took a few towns, and met a French army at a skirmish called the Battle of the Spurs (1513), from the fact that his opponents fled at the first encounter.

<sup>1</sup> This Dudley was the father of the Duke of Northumberland—see below, p. 359.



Meanwhile James IV of Scotland took advantage of Henry's absence to invade England. He preferred to follow the old Scottish policy of the French alliance, rather than to pursue the new peace policy expected from his marriage with Margaret Tudor. James paid for this venture with his life. At the battle of Flodden<sup>1</sup> (1513) near the Tweed, the Earl of Surrey won a crushing victory over the Scots, James and all his chief lords being left dead on the field. For this, Surrey was made Duke of Norfolk.

Battle of  
Flodden  
1513.

Henry had entrusted the preparations for his French war to Thomas Wolsey. This rising man was the son of a grazier. He was educated at the Grammar School of his native Ipswich, and at Magdalen College, Oxford, where he took his degree at the age of fifteen. He afterwards entered the Church, and, gaining the favour of the influential Bishop Fox, was made Dean of Lincoln and chaplain to the king. He won Henry VIII's favour by his obvious abilities, and was rewarded (1514) with the bishopric of Lincoln and the archbishopric of York. The next year (1515) Wolsey was appointed Chancellor, and was made a cardinal by the new Pope, Leo X. Even then his restless ambition was not satisfied, for he wished to become Pope himself. His influence on his royal master soon became enormous; his pride and arrogance increased beyond all bounds. The Venetian ambassador thus describes him: 'He is very handsome, learned, extremely eloquent and of vast ability. He alone transacts the same business as that which occupies all the officers and councils of Venice. He is in very great repute, seven times more so than if he were Pope. He is the person who rules both the king and the entire kingdom.'

Wolsey

Wolsey was determined to cut a figure in Europe. He wished one day to be Pope, and he wanted therefore to assert the voice of England—which meant the voice of the Cardinal—in European affairs. But he was singularly unsuccessful. He tried, indeed, to maintain a balance of power between the continental monarchies, which meant, as a contemporary observer said, 'to keep the French king and the Emperor in perpetual war and distrust'. But it may be doubted whether his tortuous

Wolsey's  
foreign  
policy

<sup>1</sup> See Scott's *Marmion* and Aytoun's *Edinburgh after Flodden*.

diplomacy affected the issue very much. Its only real results were to dissipate the treasure which Henry VII had amassed, and to impair the popularity which Henry VIII had at first possessed.

France\* and  
the Empire

His first idea was to make an alliance with France. It was not a good idea, because it meant alienating the Emperor, the



EUROPE AND WESTERN ASIA IN THE TIME OF CHARLES V

ruler of the Netherlands, whose trade with England it was most important to preserve. But Wolsey suggested the marriage of Louis XII, aged 52, with Henry's sister, Mary, aged 18. The marriage took place, though Louis died shortly afterwards (1515). Next year died Henry's father-in-law, Ferdinand of Aragon, and then (1519) the Emperor Maximilian. When these figures had passed from the scene, Francis I of France and the Emperor Charles V, young men like the English king, were Henry's and Wolsey's antagonists in the European battle of wits.

Charles V  
1519-56

The rise of the House of Hapsburg was of outstanding importance in European history. The Emperor Charles V had inherited large though scattered masses of territory (see map), which gave him control of a considerable part of Europe. From his *maternal* grandparents (Ferdinand and Isabella) he inherited

Spain, the New World, and the Spanish possessions in Italy; from his *paternal* grandparents (Maximilian of Austria and Mary of Burgundy) he inherited the Hapsburg lands in Austria, Burgundy, and the Netherlands. (See Table, p. 325.) His possessions lay on two sides of France, which allied itself against him with German princes and even Turks.

Meanwhile the diplomatic game went on. Wolsey arranged an amicable meeting between Henry and Francis I. It took place near Guisnes, and was known, from the magnificence of the display, as the Field of Cloth of Gold (1520). But Henry also had two interviews with his nephew Charles V, one before and one after his meeting with Francis, and against Wolsey's advice he concluded a secret treaty with him against France. Francis was not surprised when England declared war against him (1522); he was already at war with the Emperor.

Henry sent an army to France, which achieved nothing. The war was expensive and unpopular in England. Wolsey received a rebuff at the hands of Parliament (1523), when the members refused to discuss war-taxation until he left the House, and then voted much less than the amount he had demanded. Two years later Francis I was defeated by Charles V at Pavia (1525), in Italy, and taken prisoner. Henry and Wolsey then judged that the time was opportune for another invasion of France. They did not risk summoning another Parliament, but tried to raise an 'Amicable Loan', which was really a tax on property. 'All people cursed the Cardinal' for subverting 'the laws and liberties of England'. And as the loan nearly led to a rebellion it was decided to reverse the policy and make peace again with France (1525). Francis agreed to buy Henry's friendship for two million crowns.

Battle of  
Pavia, 1525

When Francis I was released from captivity he renewed his treaty with England, and Wolsey abandoned the imperial alliance. There were several reasons for this change of policy. Wolsey was disappointed at not being made Pope, for Charles had lent his support to a Medici cardinal, now Clement VII. Above all, the complete triumph of Charles V in Italy upset the Balance of Power. Charles's successes, indeed, were not yet over. When Clement VII formed a new league against him his German troops sacked the Holy City (1527), which now suffered

Sack of  
Rome, 1527

more from a Christian army than it had ever done from pagan barbarians.

The Pope was the Emperor's prisoner. It was at this disastrous moment that Henry began negotiations to divorce Catherine, the Emperor's aunt. The conduct of this business was given to Wolsey. His failure to carry it through brought about his downfall, and led on to Henry VIII's break with the Papacy and the subsequent reformation of the English Church. The country had been bewildered by Wolsey's foreign policy; but its interest in foreign affairs quickened as soon as the question of the king's divorce revived the old grievance of clerical and papal power in England.

#### 4. *Henry VIII and the Navy*

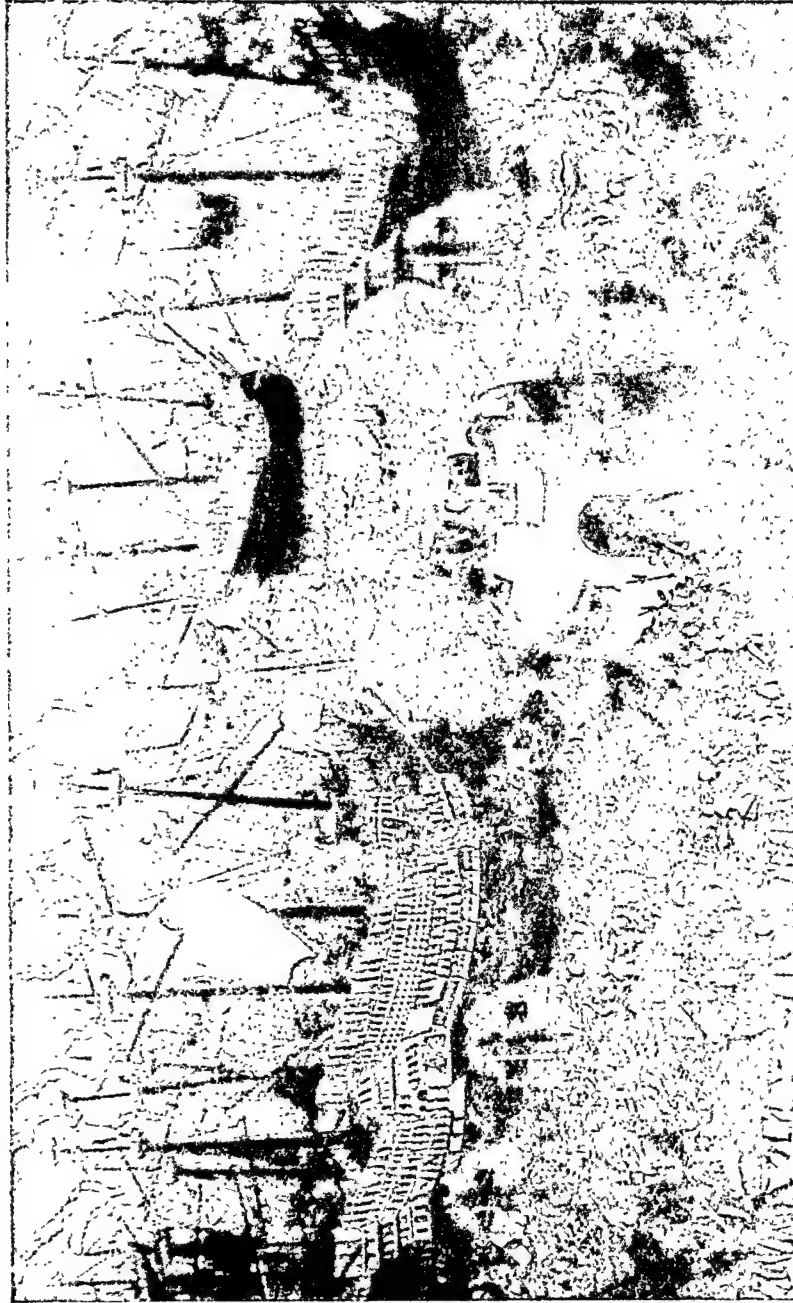
The reign of Henry VIII may be divided into two periods. The first period was marked by the ascendancy of Wolsey (1509-29), the second by Henry's breach with the Papacy.

There was one factor which was common to both periods—the king's unremitting care for the Royal Navy. While Balboa was viewing the Pacific, while Magellan's men were sailing round the world, while Cortez was conquering Mexico, and Pizarro exploiting the silver mines of Peru—Henry VIII was laying the foundations of his country's greatness on the sea.

The Mer-  
chant Navy

English ships, in early medieval times, were not divided into fighting ships and merchantmen. All were merchantmen, and all were armed—against pirates in time of peace, and, more heavily, against the enemy in time of war. When an English king requisitioned ships to cross the Channel in a French war his officers built wooden 'castles'<sup>1</sup> at either end of the ship: from these castles both arrows and the first small guns were fired. Early in the fifteenth century, some ships were being built for war only. Then, by the reign of Henry VIII, there was a great improvement in artillery, and Henry ordered large cannon from the Netherlands. It soon became obvious that the new large guns were too heavy for the 'castles'. James Baker, 'skilful in ships', is said to have been the first naval architect to adapt English ships to carry heavy guns;

<sup>1</sup> The name 'forecastle' is a survival of this practice.



**HENRY VIII AND THE NAVY**

Part of a contemporary painting (now at Hampton Court) showing Henry setting out from Dover for the Field of Cloth of Gold, in 1520.

and at the beginning of Henry VIII's reign the idea was suggested of piercing holes (called port-holes from French *porte*) in the vessel's side, through which the guns might be fired. Thus was invented the famous 'broadside'.

The Royal Navy Henry was an enthusiast at ship-building. He inherited from his father seven ships, two large and five small. By the end of his reign he had increased this number to fifty-three. The largest ship he built, the *Henry Grace à Dieu*, or the *Great Harry* (1584), was of 1,500 tons. All these ships were heavily armed with the new guns, the like of which were destined to defeat the Spanish Armada.

The French wars of Henry's reign produced no very striking naval battle. In the first war Sir Edward Howard won the command of the Channel in a battle off Brest (1512). In the second war the French did not put to sea. Twenty years later, right at the end of the reign, there was a third war. The Scots, as usual, were allied with the French. James V sent an army across the border, which was defeated by Sir Thomas Wharton at the battle of Solway Moss (1542). The French galleys attacked Portsmouth, where they tried to land, but the next day they rowed away without a battle; the existence of Henry's new fleet saved England from an invasion (1545) more carefully planned than any since the Norman Conquest.

The English broadsides And so the power of the new sea weapon was not put to a decisive test till Elizabeth's day. The English broadsides were to prove vastly superior to the Mediterranean method of warfare—which dated back to the days of the Greeks and Persians. The chief naval powers of the Mediterranean, Spain and Venice, both used the long galley, rowed by slaves, depending first on its formidable beak for ramming other ships, and secondly on its capacity to carry soldiers to board the enemy. But Henry's ships carried weapons against which the methods of galley warfare were powerless—as was seen later when Drake, with the successors of Henry's ships, won his victory at Cadiz.<sup>1</sup> Thus Henry VIII had effected a revolution in naval warfare. He was the true founder of the Royal Navy, as his father Henry VII was of the Merchant Navy.

<sup>1</sup> See below, p. 403.

## XV

### THE REFORMATION IN EUROPE

#### I. *Erasmus and More*

THE thirty years (1492-1521) between the crossing of the Atlantic by Columbus and the crossing of the Pacific by Magellan were also momentous years in the history of the Church. Three famous Popes lived in this period: Alexander VI, Julius II, and Leo X.<sup>1</sup> Their reigns were remarkable in many ways. It was Alexander VI who divided the New World between Spain and Portugal, and who sent the reformer Savonarola to the flames. Julius II played an important part in European politics and he himself fought in the interest of the Church—'letting his white beard grow, putting on armour, and proudly riding his war-horse under fire, he exhibited', says a modern historian, 'the most picturesque and romantic figure of his time'. Leo X, the patron of Michelangelo and Raphael, inspired great achievements in the realm of art; but the 'indulgence' that he sanctioned to raise funds for re-building St. Peter's provoked Luther's revolt. Neither the patronage of art and letters nor the building of St. Peter's could blind men to the fact that this brilliant period in papal history was a period of moral and spiritual decay. It was this decay that caused the voices of the great reformers to be raised in protest.

About the time that Colet at Oxford was exhorting men to imitate the life of Christ, another reformer, Friar Savonarola of Florence, was fervently preaching a similar message and winning a great following. After the death of Lorenzo de Medici this friar became for a time the real ruler of Florence. He even persuaded the people to make a bonfire of their pictures, jewels, and immoral books in a public square, and he thundered against the scandalous life of Pope Alexander. But

<sup>1</sup> Connect Alexander VI (1492-1503) with his son, Caesar Borgia, and the reforming friar, Savonarola; Julius II (1503-13), the warlike Pope, with the Holy League; and Leo X (1513-21), the patron of art and letters, with the new St. Peter's and the revolutionary friar, Luther.

the friar's popularity soon waned. Then Alexander suppressed the dangerous preacher, who was condemned as a heretic and burnt in the presence of the fickle multitude (1498).

Erasmus Amongst other reformers was Erasmus, a poor scholar of Rotterdam. When he was thirty he came to England (1498)—in Henry VII's reign—and made the acquaintance of Colet, and of More, then a young man of twenty. The friendship of these three men endured for the rest of their lives, and it will remain for ever memorable in the history of European thought. At the accession of Henry VIII Erasmus for a time made England his home, and at Cambridge he acted as Professor of Divinity and of Greek. His friend Colet, as Dean of St. Paul's, did not fear to preach before Henry VIII against the king's own policy, and, as lecturer in Greek at Oxford and founder of St. Paul's School, he did much to forward the New Learning.

But it was not merely by attacking outworn methods of teaching that these great scholars played their part. As reformers they were the leaders of their time. Erasmus, in particular, was disgusted at the lack of spiritual leadership at Rome. 'I saw with my own eyes', he says, 'Pope Julius II at Rome, marching at the head of a triumphal procession, as if he were Pompey or Caesar. St. Peter subdued the world by faith, not with arms or soldiers or military engines.' In his *Praise of Folly* (1510) Erasmus satirized kings and princes, Pope and clergy, especially the monks against whom he conceived a strong dislike.

Erasmus' New Testament 1516 In 1516 Erasmus published his scholarly edition of the New Testament, giving as far as possible the Greek original, and adding a Latin translation and annotations of his own. The object of this great work was to bring the actual words and teaching of the Scriptures before men. Erasmus hoped that men would read and understand the Bible, that 'the peasant should sing bits of it as he followed the plough, and that the weaver should hum them to the tune of his shuttle'. Both Erasmus and the Oxford Reformers sought to guide the Church back to the ideals of its Founder as portrayed in the New Testament; they used the New Learning to promote a Christian Renaissance; but, unlike Luther, they had no desire to cut themselves adrift from the Church of Rome.



About the same time that Erasmus was translating the New Testament, another reformer, Sir Thomas More, was writing a book which he called *Utopia*. More was a Londoner, born (1478) in Milk Street, Cheapside. As a boy he entered the service of Archbishop Morton, through whose influence he was sent to Canterbury Hall, Oxford, which was afterwards merged in Wolsey's college of Christ Church. It was at Oxford that the young student became influenced by the New Learning, and there that he afterwards met Colet and Erasmus. His father decided that he should enter his own profession, the law, and More left Oxford to become a student at the bar in London. His legal career was a brilliant success; he also entered Parliament, where he soon won great distinction. But, in spite of the cares of official work, More found time to keep up his friendship with Colet and Erasmus, and it was largely owing to Colet's influence that he wrote his great book.

*Utopia*,<sup>1</sup> which was written in Latin, is one of the famous books of the world. It was an account of the ideas which inspired the three friends in their hopes for the future, and was at the same time a satire on the existing state of society. These Oxford Reformers were all sincere Christians and good Catholics. They believed that the new ideas of the Renaissance, and the new spirit of the time which has been called 'Humanism', might be combined with the ideals of the Christian faith. They were shocked at the semi-paganism of Rome and Italy; they wished to see, not the Church overthrown from without, but the Church reformed from within.

In his book More goes farther than imagining a reformed Church: he pictures a reformed world. The description of his imaginary country he puts into the mouth of a sailor who was supposed to have returned from a long voyage to the New World. In place of the filthy streets of European towns More conceived a land with well-built houses, properly ventilated and surrounded by well-kept gardens, with hospitals, water-works, and halls for the public use. 'The Utopians hate war as plainly brutal, although practised more eagerly by man than by any other animal.' In Europe, says the author in an ironic passage, 'where the Christian faith and religion are practised,

<sup>1</sup> *Utopia*, i.e. οὐ τόπος, 'Nowhere'.

the sanctity of leagues is held sacred and inviolate'—the truth being, of course, that European treaties were often broken almost as soon as they were made!

**Rich and poor** With the sufferings of the poor, as More saw them in Tudor England, he showed a keen sympathy. 'Our modern republics', he says, 'are nothing but a conspiracy of the rich. The poor are left uneducated, too often brought up in haunts of crime and vice, then punished for becoming thieves and vagabonds.' He comments on the number of thieves hanged in England—'for the most part twenty hanged together on one gallows, and I cannot but marvel that thieves nevertheless are in every place so rife and so rank.'

**Enclosures** One of the most famous passages describes the evils which resulted from the 'enclosure' of land<sup>1</sup> in England—a process which Wolsey had tried to check. In the interests of the wool trade large areas of land were being enclosed for sheep farms, with the result that whole villages were falling into decay.

'Your sheep that were wont to be so meek and tame, and so small eaters, now be become so great devourers and so wild, that they eat up and swallow down the very men themselves' (i.e. sheep farms put men out of work). 'For noblemen and gentlemen, yea, and certain abbots, holy men no doubt, leave no ground for tillage: they enclose all into pastures: they throw down houses: they pluck down towns, and leave nothing standing, but only the church to be made a sheep-house. In order that one covetous and insatiable cormorant and the very plague of his native country may enclose many thousand acres of ground within one pale or hedge, the ploughmen be thrust out of their own.'

Not long after the publication of *Utopia* More was promoted into the royal service—dragged, rather, says Erasmus, 'for no one ever struggled harder to gain admission there than More struggled to escape'. Henry VIII was charmed, as better men than he were, by the gentleness of More's character, and by the brilliance of his wit. He showed the able lawyer great favour. Although the king was not then the odious tyrant he afterwards became, More made no mistake about his true character. 'If my head should win him a castle in France', he remarked to his son-in-law, 'it should not fail to go.'

<sup>1</sup> See Ch. XIV (Henry VII), and Ch. XVI (Edward VI—Somerset).

## 2. *Luther and the German Reformation*

It was not, however, by a Utopian reformation in laws and manners that the world was to be changed; nor by a peaceful reform of the Church which Erasmus and More so much desired. The evils of the time—the worldliness of popes, the selfishness of princes, the ignorance of the people—were plain enough for all to see. But these evils may be likened to fermenting agents: they led, not to a peaceful change, but to an explosion—a revolution. The man whose career most influenced the outbreak of this revolution was Martin Luther (1483–1546), the friar who shook the world.

Luther was born of peasant parents at Eisleben in Saxony (1483). He was a clever boy, and his father managed to send him to Erfurt University. A few years later he suddenly renounced the world and entered a friary at Erfurt,<sup>1</sup> where the religious life was strictly upheld. A visitor to the friary, struck by his learning and earnestness, procured his removal to the new Saxon University of Wittenberg, where for ten years he was lecturer in theology. It was during this period that Luther was sent (1511) to Rome on a mission, and there he was horrified, like Erasmus, at the worldly lives of the Pope and Cardinals. 'The Italians', he said, 'make sport of the true religion; and they rail at us Christians because we believe everything in the Scriptures.'

Then came the fateful year 1517; though no one, least of all Luther himself, realized that in that year he was to begin a world revolution. The Pope, Leo X, was in need of money for the re-building of St. Peter's—a laudable enough object. Collections were made for the purpose in Germany; and a Dominican friar named Tetzel was commissioned to raise money by the grant of indulgences.<sup>2</sup> When Tetzel entered a German town for this purpose the priests and monks, the town council,

<sup>1</sup> Luther was not, strictly speaking, a monk (as he is often called), but one of the Austin Friars, who lived under a rule much like that of the monks.

<sup>2</sup> *Indulgences* were 'the granting of the remission of the punishment due for sin committed, to such as, having confessed their guilt, were truly sorry for what they had done and fulfilled certain specified conditions for obtaining an Indulgence'.

the teachers and scholars, and a crowd of citizens escorted him with banners and lighted candles and hymns. With bells ringing and the organ playing, the procession entered the principal church, where a great cross was erected and the Pope's banner displayed. Then after a sermon the sales began.

**Indulgences** The practice of indulgences was a very old custom connected with the Catholic sacrament of penance, and Luther, like other churchmen, believed that at its basis there was a great truth. But, in the hands of Tetzel, the sale of indulgences became an open scandal, for he offered them to all who paid, without stressing sufficiently the need for penitence. He gave out that 'as soon as the coin rang in the chest, the soul for whom the money was paid would go straightway to heaven'. Many thoughtful people besides Luther were revolted by this abuse of the practice. Erasmus, for instance, had recently written: 'The Court of Rome clearly has lost all sense of shame; for what could be more shameless than these continued indulgences?' It was left for Martin Luther to deliver a blow at this abuse which in due course shook the whole papal system. He was disgusted at Tetzel's behaviour. He therefore wrote out **Luther's Theses 1517** ninety-five theses (i.e. topics for discussion) attacking the abuses. He nailed his theses to the church door at Wittenberg. The effect was tremendous: the growing protest against the worldliness of the Church and the desire for its reform now centred upon Luther.

Yet at the time Pope Leo X thought it was all a joke—'friars wrangling as usual', as he remarked; 'as usual', for there had, of course, been many reformers before Luther. From the thirteenth century onwards there had been a long line of reformers—the friars St. Francis and St. Dominic; Wycliffe and the Lollards (a few of whom had survived all persecutions) and John Huss of Bohemia; the friar Savonarola; the scholar Erasmus and the Oxford Reformers who worked for a return to the primitive Church of the Bible.

It is doubtful whether Luther knew where he was going when he launched his attack, and none goes so far as he who knows not whither he is going. But by 1520 he had gone very far indeed: he had attacked the doctrine of papal supremacy and the sacramental system. He was using violent words: 'If',

he said, 'we strike thieves with the gallows and the sword, why do we not much more attack in arms these masters of perdition, these Cardinals, these Popes and all this sink which has corrupted the Church of God?' His words were spread throughout Germany by the agency of the printing press, without which it is doubtful whether his attack on the Papacy would have met with the success that it did.

History presents no greater contrast in character than that between the Medici Pope, Leo X, and his great German antagonist. Luther was passionate and highly strung, but he was an honest man, of free peasant stock, and did not shrink from the path of revolution on which he had now set his feet. The world of Leo X was far removed from him. To Luther the builder of St. Peter's and the patron of Michelangelo was a worldly prince who robbed honest Germans in order to live in luxury, and Leo understood Luther as little as Luther understood him. The cultured, kindly, ease-loving Pope had little idea of the forces behind the wrangling friar.

In 1520 the Pope issued a Bull of Excommunication against Luther. Public opinion in Germany enabled Luther to defy the Pope: he burnt the Papal Bull in the market-place at Wittenberg. At this act of open defiance the defenders of the old order stood aghast. The following year Luther was cited to appear before the Diet (Congress) of the Holy Roman Empire at Worms (on the Rhine). The young Emperor, Charles V, gave him a safe-conduct, and Luther obeyed the summons. His friends warned him of the fate of John Huss at the Council of Constance, who (a hundred years before) had been burnt as a heretic in spite of an Emperor's<sup>1</sup> safe-conduct. 'I will go', replied Luther, 'though every tile in the city is a devil.'

At the Diet of Worms (1521) Luther was asked to recant the opinions which he had uttered and published. He replied that he dared not act against the Bible and his conscience which told him he was right. From this position he would not move: 'Here stand I. I can do no other. God help me. Amen.' Luther, in thus setting up 'the Bible and the Bible only' and the individual conscience against the authority of the Catholic

<sup>1</sup> The Emperor Sigismund.

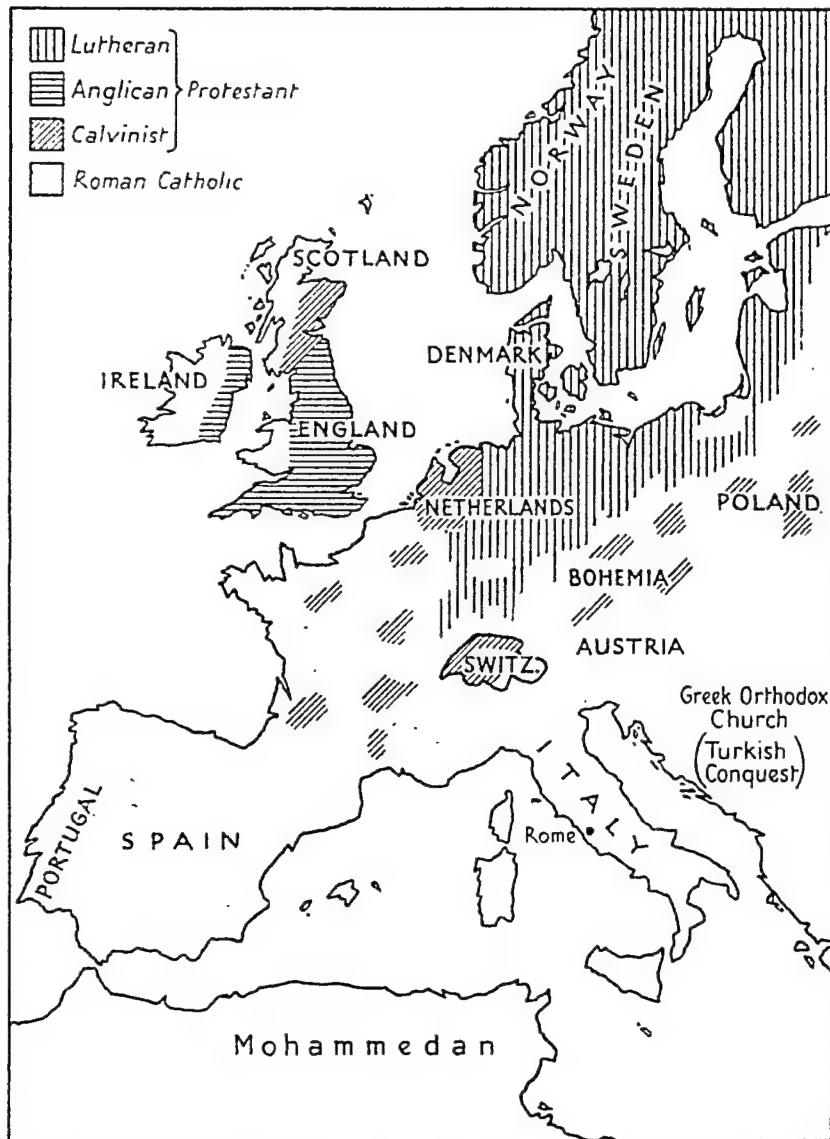
Church, defined that attitude to religion which was afterwards called Protestant.<sup>1</sup>

In that same fateful year Henry VIII wrote his *Golden Book*, refuting Luther's arguments. He sent the book to Leo X who awarded him the title of 'Defender of the Faith'. This title the kings of England still retain, as we are reminded by the inscription on our coins—Fid. Def. (Fidei Defensor). Shortly afterwards Leo died, unaware that the old world, of which he was one of the greatest ornaments, was about to crash in ruins.

On leaving Worms Luther was protected by his friend the Elector of Saxony who guarded him in his castle of Wartburg. Here Luther occupied his days in translating the Bible into German, and so placing in the hands of his countrymen the weapon which he himself had used to defy the Church. But even the Bible, in which Luther placed so much trust, can be made into an instrument of tyranny; and thereafter many Protestant teachers, interpreting the Bible in their own way, imposed their own religious views on their flocks in a spirit of narrow intolerance. The day of religious toleration was not yet.

Civil War  
in Germany  
  
Peace of  
Augsburg  
1555  
Towards the end of Luther's life the Reformation in Germany entered on its disastrous political phase. Many of the German princes saw that it would benefit them to throw off the authority of the Pope. Civil war broke out between the Protestant and Catholic princes in the year of Luther's death (1546), the Emperor Charles V being at the head of the Catholic forces. At last, by the Peace of Augsburg (1555), it was agreed to allow certain States to adopt the Lutheran religion and to disown the authority of the Pope; the religion of each state was to be decided by the religion of its ruler (*cujus regio, ejus religio*). Such a principle is, of course, fatal to true religion; it merely expressed the fact that the princes were masters of the Church as well as of the State. The decision of Augsburg for a time averted further bloodshed. But it ended the religious unity of Germany and ultimately of Europe, and it destroyed the old Christendom with its bond of one Church.

<sup>1</sup> The name *Protestant* was first used after the Diet of Speyer (1529), which refused to allow toleration of Lutheranism. The Lutheran princes then issued a formal *Protest* against the decision of the Diet; it is from this protest that the name Protestant is derived.



5. THE REFORMATION





## XVI

### THE REFORMATION IN ENGLAND AND SCOTLAND

#### 1. *Henry VIII and the Pope*

##### (i) *The Breach with Rome.*

HENRY VIII wrote to Leo X to say that 'ever since he knew Luther's heresy in Germany, he had made it his study how to extirpate it'. Luther made an abusive reply: 'Damnable rottenness and worm that he is . . . it is only right that I, in the cause of Christ, should bespatter his English Majesty with his own mud and filth.' But the Pope gave Henry the title of 'Defender of the Faith' (1521). Nevertheless it was Henry VIII who began the movement known as the English Reformation, though in his time it was a political, not a religious, movement. The religious change came later. Henry VIII severed the connexion between England and Rome, in so far as Acts of Parliament could sever it.

Hostility to the Papal power was no new thing. Even in England, where the spiritual influence of the Church over the people seemed almost as strong as ever, Parliament had yet shown itself hostile to the wealth and privileges of the Church and anxious to keep the control of the English Church in England. And both Edward III and Richard II had issued Statutes<sup>1</sup> declaring papal appointments in England illegal and forbidding appeals to a foreign (i.e. papal) court. Two centuries later those old Statutes were used by Henry VIII to begin the English Reformation.

It was unfortunate for Henry VIII's own reputation that this great national problem should be mixed up with the king's matrimonial troubles. The immediate cause of the quarrel with the Pope was Henry's desire to divorce his wife, Catherine of Aragon. When the question was first raised openly with the Pope (1527) Henry and Catherine had been married eighteen years. During that time the queen had borne Henry seven

Defender of  
the Faith  
1521

The Di-  
vorce ques-  
tion

<sup>1</sup> The Statutes of Provisors and Praemunire (1351 and 1393).

children, but all had died in infancy except one, the Princess Mary—and no woman had yet reigned in England. The last child was born in 1518; it was obvious by 1527 that Henry would die without a male heir unless he married again. Such a prospect was dangerous to the Tudor dynasty and might lead to another civil war. Besides, Henry very much wanted to marry again. He had conceived a violent passion for Anne Boleyn, a lady of the court. To make Anne queen it was first necessary to get rid of Catherine. The death of all his male children troubled Henry's conscience and convinced him that his marriage with his brother's widow had offended God and was no true marriage.

Henry appealed to Pope Clement VII to annul the marriage. The Pope, however, was not in a position to offend the Spanish party. For Catherine was the aunt of the Emperor Charles V who had just occupied and sacked Rome, and the Pope was now the Emperor's prisoner.<sup>1</sup> Wolsey's diplomacy had thus ended by making Charles V master of the Papacy at the moment that Henry VIII wanted his divorce problem solved. The most the Pope would do was to order the case to be tried before a Court, which included Cardinal Campeggio and Cardinal Wolsey, who was Papal Legate, that is, the Pope's representative in England. The Court opened at Blackfriars (May 1529). Two months later it was adjourned without coming to a decision. Then Campeggio left England. The next day a writ was issued against Wolsey for acting as Legate, although he had the king's licence to do so—but considerations of fairness never weighed with Henry VIII. The failure of the Court was followed by the fall of Wolsey, and by the summoning of Parliament (November 1529). Henry then began an attack on the papal power, relying on the English tradition, as old as the Conquest, of resistance to the claims of Rome.

Cardinal Wolsey was the first victim of the royal wrath. On the failure of the Court to pronounce judgement he was dismissed from the king's service, and stripped of most of his wealth. The office of Chancellor was given to Sir Thomas More (1529). Next year Wolsey retired to his northern diocese, that of York. But while he was at Sheffield the king sent the Con-

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 330.

The  
Legate's  
Court, 1529

Fall and  
death of  
Wolsey  
1529-30

stable of the Tower to arrest him for treason. Wolsey, seeing that his death was intended, lost all hope. As he journeyed south he rapidly became ill, and had to be carried into Leicester Abbey. 'I am come to lay my bones among you', he said to the monks; and that night he died (1530). Among his last words was the tragic cry: 'If I had served God as diligently as I have done the king, He would not have given me over in my grey hairs'; and that cry truly reveals the spirit of the New Monarchy. Yet Wolsey had been as despotic in his way as Henry. 'He was feared by all,' wrote Erasmus; 'he was loved by few—I may say by nobody.'

Meanwhile the famous 'Reformation Parliament' (1529-36) proceeded to do the king's will. As soon as it met (November 1529) it at once attacked clerical abuses by forbidding pluralities (the holding of more than one living), and by regulating the fees (for wills, burials, and so on) payable to the clergy and to the church courts—whereupon the clergy cried that 'the Commons seek the goods, not the good, of the Church'. Next, Henry prosecuted the clergy for having acknowledged Wolsey as Papal Legate, for this was contrary to the old Statutes of Praemunire; he then declared all Church property confiscate. Then followed the 'Submission of the Clergy', by which they agreed to pay a large fine, and to recognize Henry as 'chief protector and supreme head of the Church and Clergy, so far as the law of Christ will allow' (1531). But Henry's agents at Rome had not yet brought the Pope 'to reason'. Parliament then passed the Annates Act (1532), forbidding a bishop on his election to pay the customary firstfruits (first year's income) to 'Our Holy Father the Pope'.<sup>1</sup>

The Reformation  
Parliament  
1529-36

Anti-Papal  
Acts

The Pope, however, took no step to annul the king's marriage, and Henry decided to proceed without the Pope. A chaplain of the Boleyn family, Thomas Cranmer, had been consulting the universities of Europe about the divorce; and Henry remarked that Cranmer had 'got the sow by the right ear'. Events then moved swiftly. Some time in January 1533 Henry was secretly married to Anne Boleyn; in March Cranmer was made Archbishop of Canterbury; in April the Archbishop's Court pronounced Henry's marriage to Catherine null

Cranmer

Henry mar-  
ries Anne  
1533

<sup>1</sup> Two years later firstfruits were reserved to the Crown.

and void; in June the secret marriage was acknowledged and Anne was crowned Queen of England. That autumn she gave birth to a daughter, the future Queen Elizabeth. The birth of this child, illegitimate in the eyes of Catholic Europe, was a great disappointment to her father who had hoped for a male heir. So England's greatest sovereign was heralded into the world amid an almost universal chorus of disapproval.

Excommu-  
nication of  
Henry, 1533

The putting away of the blameless Catherine, together with the marriage to Anne, was of course a flagrant defiance of the Pope. Clement VII pronounced Henry's marriage to Catherine valid (1533), and then prepared a Bull of Excommunication against the king (published two years later). But Henry had tasted power and knew his own strength. He was confident also that there would be no repetition of the papal triumph of the days of King John, for he was well aware that he had not, like his ancestor, offended the bulk of his subjects. Besides, Henry knew that neither the King of France nor the Emperor was prepared to risk an invasion of England at the papal bidding. Henry, therefore, calmly proceeded on his way.

It remained to complete the breach with the Papacy. After Anne's coronation Parliament passed the Appeals Act (1533), forbidding all appeals by English clergy to Rome. Next year came a series of important Acts, designed to bind the Church in England fast to the royal supremacy. All bishops were to be 'elected' by the cathedral chapters; but the chapters were bound to elect, within twelve days, the person nominated by the king. All payments of money (including Peter's Pence) to Rome were forbidden; and the clergy were not to take any oath to 'the Bishop of Rome, otherwise called the Pope'.

Act of Suc-  
cession  
1534

Further, by the Act of Succession (1534), the Crown was vested in the heirs of Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn, and all subjects were required to take the Oath of the Succession or be charged with high treason. Sir Thomas More and Bishop Fisher refused and were imprisoned. Then Parliament ordained in the famous

Act of  
Supremacy  
1534

Act of Supremacy (1534) that 'the king, our sovereign lord, his heirs and successors, kings of this realm, shall be taken, accepted and reputed the only supreme head in earth of the Church of England, called *Anglicana Ecclesia*'. Finally, a stern Treasons Act, of the same year, enacted that any one who

called the king a tyrant, heretic, infidel, or usurper, was liable to the death penalty. With the last session (1536) of the Reformation Parliament came the overthrow of the lesser monasteries.

Thus, during the seven years of the Reformation Parliament (1529-36), through the passing of the Acts of Annates, Appeals, and Supremacy, Henry VIII severed the age-long connexion with Rome. No longer would the Pope's supremacy conflict, as of old, with the king's supremacy, and no longer would the clergy (in Henry's own words) 'be but half our subjects'. Tyrant as he was, Henry could scarcely have effected this revolution without the tacit support of the nation at large.

(ii) *The Triumph of Henry VIII.*

In the same year that the Act of Supremacy was passed (1534) a man of humble birth named Thomas Cromwell was made the king's secretary. Cromwell owed his promotion to his own abilities, which were considerable. He was an ideal instrument for the royal tyranny—he was entirely without principle, without scruples, without mercy, and for six years (1534-40) this genius and scoundrel did his utmost to carry out his master's will.

Thomas  
Cromwell  
1534-40

The first victims of the new tyranny were five courageous priests who were sent to their death (1535) for refusing to swear to the Acts of Succession and Supremacy. They were John Houghton, prior of the London Charterhouse, two other Carthusian priors, another monk, and John Hale, vicar of Isleworth. The next to suffer were two eminent men—More, the great scholar, and Fisher, the saintly bishop of Rochester, a friend of Erasmus and Catherine's confessor. They were now brought to trial and condemned for treason.

Execution  
of the  
Carthusian  
monks, 1535

Fisher was the first to suffer. Henry's wrath was especially aroused against him, as the Pope had just made him a cardinal. 'What, is he still so lusty?' quoth the wrathful king, 'Well, let the Pope send him a hat when he will; but I will provide that whensoever it cometh, he shall wear it on his shoulders, for head he shall have none to set it on.' Fisher, an old man of nearly seventy, excited popular sympathy by his noble bearing at the end. On the morning of his execution he told his servant

Execution  
of Fisher

to remove the hair shirt which he usually wore, 'and instead thereof to lay him forth a clean white shirt and all the best apparel he had as cleanly bright as may be'. The servant asked him why he so commanded. 'Dost thou not mark', said the bishop, 'that this is our wedding day, and that it behoveth us therefore to use more cleanliness of the marriage?' After the execution the bishop's head was impaled on London Bridge. The next day the king attended a play in which His Majesty was represented as cutting off the heads of the clergy—a performance which greatly appealed to the royal sense of humour.

Trial  
of More

When More was first examined (1534), the Duke of Norfolk had reminded him of the danger in which he stood. 'The wrath of the prince', said Norfolk, 'is death.' 'Is that all, my lord?' replied More. 'Then in good faith the difference between your grace and me is that I shall die to-day and you to-morrow.' Perhaps the duke remembered these words thirteen years later, when he awaited the executioner's axe.<sup>1</sup> In July 1535 More was tried in Westminster Hall for 'traitorously attempting to deprive the king of his title of Supreme Head of the Church of England'. After he was condemned he spoke his mind openly to the Chancellor who presided. 'My lord, for one bishop of your opinion, I have a hundred saints of mine; and for one Parliament of yours, and God knows of what kind, I have all the general councils (of the church) for a thousand years.' A week later he was beheaded. 'Pluck up thy spirit, man,' he said to the executioner—for his own courage did not fail. As he knelt at the block he moved aside his beard. 'Pity that should be cut', he said, 'that has not committed treason.' So, with a jest upon his lips, he died.

His execu-  
tion, 1535

The execution of the Carthusian monks, of Cardinal Fisher, and of Sir Thomas More sent a thrill of horror throughout Christendom. These men, the first Catholic martyrs in England, had to choose between loyalty to the king and loyalty to their religion. They bravely chose the latter.

Execution  
of Anne  
Boleyn, 1536

The year after More's execution the queen, Anne Boleyn, went to her doom. The king had long since tired of her, especially since she had failed to produce an heir. She was accused of misconduct, tried, condemned, and executed (1536).

<sup>1</sup> See below, p. 353.

Two days before her execution Cranmer pronounced her marriage to the king invalid, and on the day she died he gave Henry a special licence to marry again. The next day Henry was betrothed to a lady called Jane Seymour, and he married her within a fortnight. The disgusting haste of the whole proceedings throws a lurid light on his character. Jane Seymour, alone of Henry's queens, fulfilled his hopes, for she gave him the desired heir, the future Edward VI (born 1537); but she survived the birth of her son by only twelve days.

Jane  
Seymour

Meanwhile Henry took a step which further increased his power and wealth. This was an attack on Church property—the dissolution of the monasteries (1535-9). Henry found three reasons for this step. First, the monks were the main supporters of the Papal authority in England, and they were members of orders which were spread over Europe. It had proved possible to separate the English bishops and clergy from allegiance to the Pope; this was not possible with the monastic orders, which were international, not insular, institutions. The second reason was the wealth of the monasteries, which was the result of the pious bequests of many centuries. The cry against monastic wealth had been raised many times previously in English history, particularly by Wycliffe and others from the time of Edward III and Richard II. The courtiers of Henry VIII and the rising middle class were greedy for land, and Henry saw that by ministering to their greed he could make his new nobility and their new property a firm support of his Reformation. The third reason for ending the monasteries was the reason given to Parliament: that the monks had outlived their day of usefulness and were abandoned to idleness and vice. There were over 600 religious houses in England, and no doubt there was some truth in this charge. Zealous churchmen had long known that all was not well with these ancient institutions. In Henry VII's reign the Oxford Reformers had rebuked monkish follies, and Cardinal Morton had noted the 'incurable uselessness' of many of the smaller houses where the monks were idle and ignorant. Cardinal Wolsey had obtained a Papal Bull to visit the monasteries, and had begun to suppress some, intending to use their revenues for the benefit of education and the New Learning and to found new bishoprics. One of them,

The  
Monasteries

St. Frideswide's Priory at Oxford, he converted into Cardinal College (later Christ Church).

Cromwell's visitation In 1535 Henry made Thomas Cromwell his Vicar-General, with power to visit any monastery in England. The character of Cromwell was sufficient guarantee that the visitation would not be conducted fairly. He knew what was expected of him; he was to be 'The Hammer of the Monks'. His agents hurried through England, visited some of the monasteries, and drew up an evil report. This report unfortunately no longer exists. Our only information is derived from Cromwell's note-books and from the letters of his agents, from which we may gather something of their methods. For example, Dr. Layton, vicar of Harrow-on-the-Hill, dashed through southern England from Gloucestershire to Kent between August and October 1535. He condemned monasteries wholesale, on insufficient evidence, although at the same time he did not scruple to accept bribes from some, or to help himself to plate and jewels from others. However, Parliament was satisfied, and the country squires, anxious for the 'goods of the Church', shouted 'Down with them!' The Act dissolving 276 of the lesser monasteries of England (1536) was the last important Act of the Reformation Parliament.

Lesser monasteries dissolved 1536 In dissolving the smaller monasteries first, Henry had cautiously tested his power. But his violent measures had (by 1536) caused grave discontent, especially in the west and north, and in Parliament itself. His wholesale destruction of the smaller monasteries was followed by two popular uprisings. The first occurred in Lincolnshire, where the rebels were crushed by a military force under the Duke of Suffolk. The second rising, in Yorkshire, known as the Pilgrimage of Grace, was much more serious (1536). In the barren north, where towns were few and far between, the monks were still popular. In Yorkshire they had been the only people to dispense hospitality to the wandering beggar and the ordinary traveller. The work of the Cistercians, too, as sheep-farmers, was a benefit to a country where agriculture was difficult; and it was feared that the dissolution of the larger abbeys (like Fountains) was only a matter of time.

Pilgrimage of Grace 1536 A lawyer called Robert Aske mustered the rebels on Skip-



worth Moor, and then took possession of York; the expelled monks were restored to their monasteries. The king then sent the Duke of Norfolk to Yorkshire, but when the latter reached Doncaster he found the rising too formidable to risk a battle. So he adopted the usual expedient in such cases—a general promise of pardon if the rebels would submit, and this was successful for the time being. But a further outbreak (1537) caused the king to act with a ferocity congenial to his temper. 'You shall in any wise', he wrote to his agents, 'cause such dreadful execution to be done upon a good number of the inhabitants of every town, village and hamlet . . . as well by the hanging of them up in trees or by the quartering of them, and the setting of their heads and quarters in every town great or small, as they may be a fearful spectacle to others hereafter that they would practise any like matter.' The leaders and no less than twelve abbots were hanged for their part in the rebellion. That was the end of the Pilgrimage of Grace.

The following year the famous shrine of Becket at Canterbury was attacked. Thomas Becket was declared (April 1538) 'a false saint and a traitor to the Supreme Head of the Church'; his bones were burnt, his shrine pillaged and its offerings confiscated—and thus Henry VIII in his own way showed that he had won the battle that Henry II had lost!

Then Henry was ready to turn his attention to the greater monasteries, although Parliament had saved them earlier because of their good conduct. Cromwell and his agents now (1539) began a persecution of the abbots: many were induced to surrender their abbeys to the king; others could only be reduced by methods of terror. The Abbots of Reading and Colchester were tried for treason; the Abbot of Glastonbury for felony. All three were executed. The odious methods of Cromwell are well shown in some notes left in his own handwriting: 'To see that the evidence be well sorted and the indictments well drawn against the said abbots. The Abbot of Reading to be sent down to be tried and executed at Reading with his complices. The Abbot of Glaston to be tried at Glaston, and also executed there with his complices.' The last Abbot of Glastonbury, a pious, venerable man beloved in the countryside, was executed with two of his brethren on Glastonbury Tor, after a mock trial

Dissolution  
of the larger  
abbeyes, 1539

(November 1539). These ferocities had the desired effect: many less brave spirits gave in, and soon there were no monasteries left.

Monastic  
wealth

The dissolution of 616 religious houses was the greatest revolution in the ownership of land in England since the Norman Conquest. The monastic income has been variously estimated at between one-fifth and one-third of the total rental of England.<sup>1</sup> This newly acquired wealth the king might have used in developing public works, such as education. Some of it was spent in re-building the Navy; but the king's own greed and the greed of courtiers swallowed most of the spoil. A thousand newly enriched families became the nobility on which Henry in future relied for support. The 'Abbey' where the descendants or successors of these Tudor families now live is a name to be found in many an English village. But sad indeed was the fate of the original buildings. Some, like the great church at Tewkesbury, have been preserved in the form of parish churches; others have been partly preserved to form cathedrals.<sup>2</sup> But the greater number were ruthlessly destroyed by their new possessors, their roofs despoiled for the valuable lead, their walls made quarries for new buildings, their treasures scattered, and their ruins left desolate. Whatever defence may be made for the suppression of the monastic orders, no excuse can be offered for this orgy of destruction, which deprived England of some of her noblest monuments.

Ruin of the  
abbeyes

It is probable that at least 15,000 persons were cast adrift. These people went to swell the already large number of the unemployed, for whom Tudor statesmanship could find no better relief than the savage punishments inflicted on thieves and vagabonds.<sup>3</sup> Some of the monks were given benefices or pensioned by the Government, but the pensions were not always

<sup>1</sup> The movables and capitalized value of monastic lands and rents confiscated have been estimated to amount to about £20,000,000 of our money.

<sup>2</sup> The abbeyes of Peterborough, Gloucester, Bristol, Chester, and Oxford were made into the seats of new bishoprics by Henry VIII, and these abbey churches were thus preserved in the form of cathedrals. Westminster Abbey was also made the seat of a bishopric; and though the bishopric was afterwards suppressed, the abbey was given to St. Paul's Cathedral, and so happily preserved.

<sup>3</sup> See below, p. 432.

paid; the occupants of the lesser houses fared worse than those of the greater. The hospitality which the monks had always given to the poor was now removed. There was nothing to take its place, and many monks and nuns joined the ranks of those who had formerly subsisted on their charity. Many gaps<sup>1</sup> were left in national life, for the abbeys (said Aske) 'were one of the beauties of this realm to all men and strangers passing through the same; all gentlemen much succoured in their needs with money, and in nunneries their daughters brought up in virtue. And such abbeys as were near the danger of seabanks were great maintainers of sea-walls and dykes, builders of bridges and highways, and such other things for the commonwealth.'

(iii) *Conflicting Parties.*

When he had enforced the Act of Supremacy, destroyed the monasteries, and sent the chief supporters of the Pope's authority to their death, Henry VIII's Reformation was completed. He had achieved the fusion of Church and State under one head, the Sovereign, as nearly as it was possible for any man to do so. But Henry was no Lutheran. He had no more sympathy with the reformers in doctrine now than he had when he wrote his book against Luther, and English Lutherans had been burnt at the stake. The king would permit no change in the traditional form of Catholic worship. But if Henry was untouched by the ideas of the German Reformers, there were some people in England, including Archbishop Cranmer, who were attracted by them. One of the main changes which Luther made in Germany was the translation of the Bible into his native tongue. And Cranmer was eventually able to persuade the king to make one concession to the reforming spirit, and allow an English Bible to be published.

John Wycliffe's Bible<sup>2</sup> was more than a century old at the time of the accession of Henry VIII, in whose reign a young Oxford scholar named William Tyndale translated most of the Bible into English from the original Greek and Hebrew. 'If

<sup>1</sup> Thirty-one abbots now disappeared from the House of Lords, and for the first time the lay lords outnumbered the spiritual lords.

<sup>2</sup> See above, Chapter XI, Section 2.

God spare my life,' he said to some ignorant clergymen to whom he talked, 'I will cause a boy that driveth a plough shall know more of the Scriptures than thou dost.' Tyndale travelled in Germany, heard Luther preach, and became a Protestant. His great translation, one of the noblest works in English, was made the basis of the Authorized Version of James I's reign. But under Henry VIII it was not allowed into England, and Tyndale himself was soon afterwards burnt as a heretic in the Netherlands. But since, in spite of prohibitions, Tyndale's Bible was smuggled into England and sold there, it was decided to issue an official translation, made by 'great, learned and Catholic persons'. Under Cromwell's patronage Miles Coverdale made the translation from the Latin (1535). Two years later another version, based on those of Tyndale and Coverdale, was prepared by 'Thomas Matthew';<sup>1</sup> a later edition of this, known as the Great Bible, was issued with the king's authority, and ordered to be used in all churches. At the end of the reign a Litany also appeared in English.

The Great  
Bible, 1539

Six Articles  
1539

In doctrinal matters Henry continued to be rigidly orthodox. The Act of Six Articles was passed by Parliament (1539), making it punishable by burning to deny any one of the six Catholic doctrines<sup>2</sup> named. This Act became known as the 'Whip with six strings'; Cranmer shook in his shoes and packed off his wife and children to Germany. In the same year six men were executed at the same time and place: three were priests, hanged for denying the royal supremacy; three were Protestant heretics, condemned under the Act of Six Articles. In this same year, too, a man was hanged in London for eating meat on a Friday.

Meanwhile Thomas Cromwell, fresh from his triumphs over monks, was arranging to ally Henry with the Protestant princes of Germany, who were then slowly drifting into war with the Emperor. He hastily negotiated a marriage between the king and Anne, sister of the Duke of Cleves (on the Rhine).

Anne of  
Cleves

<sup>1</sup> Thomas Matthew was his pseudonym, John Rogers his real name. His version was known as 'Matthew's Bible'. See also p. 366.

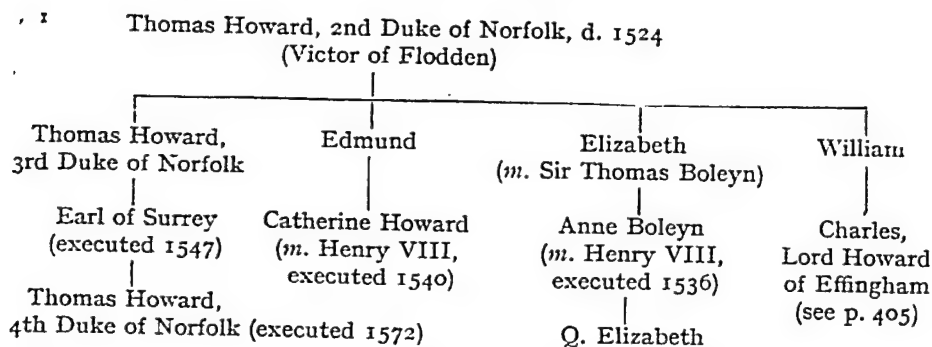
<sup>2</sup> The *Six Articles* asserted the doctrines of Transubstantiation, Communion in one kind, celibacy of priests, obligation of vows of chastity, necessity of private Masses, and auricular confession.

But when this Lutheran princess arrived in England, Henry had changed his mind about the German alliance. He also took an immediate dislike to Anne; he married her, but looked about for an excuse to divorce her as soon as possible. His wrath fell on Cromwell, who in the following year was arrested for treason. We need waste no sympathy on Thomas Cromwell, who, sentenced without trial and condemned unheard, went to a death to which he had sent many better men (1540). While he held sway, 'men felt', said Erasmus, 'as though a scorpion lay sleeping beneath every stone'.

Execution  
of Cromwell  
1540

In the same year Henry found means for divorcing Anne of Cleves, and, partly to mark his disapproval of the reforming party, he next married Catherine Howard, niece of the Duke of Norfolk, who was the leader of the orthodox nobles.<sup>1</sup> But Catherine Howard suffered (1540) the same fate as her cousin Anne Boleyn. Three years later Henry married his sixth and last wife, Catherine Parr,<sup>2</sup> who had already outlived two husbands, and was destined to outlive the king. Her influence, in so far as she dared assert it, was exerted on the side of the reformers, and in Henry's last years the Norfolk (Catholic) party suffered a decline. In December 1546 Norfolk and his son, the Earl of Surrey, were suddenly arrested on a charge of treason. In the New Year, however, the king became very ill;

Henry's last  
days



<sup>2</sup> Note the *political aspect* of Henry's marriages:

1. Catherine of Aragon (1509), Spanish alliance.
2. Anne Boleyn, and 3. Jane Seymour, Breach with Rome.
4. Anne of Cleves, Alliance with German Protestants.
5. Catherine Howard, Reaction in favour of English Catholics.
6. Catherine Parr, English Protestant party more in favour.

on the 15th of January Surrey was beheaded; on the 27th Norfolk was sentenced to death; on the 28th the king died, so that Norfolk was saved in the nick of time.

Death of  
of Henry  
VIII, 1547

It remains to note how Henry VIII, like his ancestor Edward I, asserted his influence in all parts of the British Isles. After the Pilgrimage of Grace he set up afresh the Council of the North to keep that wild and isolated area in order. And, as befitted a king of Welsh descent, he finally incorporated Wales into England. He increased the power of the Council of Wales; he ended the feudal rule of the 1411 Marcher lords and carved five new shires out of their areas, while Welsh shires and towns henceforth sent their representatives to the English parliament. The Wales, without sacrificing its language and culture, became a part of England. 'A better people to govern', it was said, 'and better subjects of their sovereign, Europe holdeth not.'

Ireland Henry VIII also began the reorganization of Ireland. After his breach with the Pope he declared himself King (instead of Lord) of Ireland. He did not hesitate to suppress the rebellion of the Earl of Kildare, who was executed for treason along with his five uncles at Tyburn (1537). Henry took advantage of the rebellion to make attempts, as Henry VII had done, at Irish reform. He enriched Irish chiefs with Irish abbeyes and lands, as a bribe to induce them to accept the royal supremacy over the Irish Church and to attend Parliament. But the Reformation, which succeeded in England and in Wales, failed in Ireland; and this difference of religion was the underlying cause of all the blood-stained record of Anglo-Irish relations in the next four centuries.

Scotland Finally, Henry VIII hoped to unite the Crowns of England and Scotland. After he had been involved in a war with his nephew, James V, who died shortly after the defeat of his forces at Solway Moss (1542), Henry proposed to marry his young heir, Prince Edward, to the Scottish baby princess, Mary Stuart. He seemed to think that the best way to bring about this marriage was to send the Earl of Hertford with an army to burn Edinburgh—which was done (1544). The Scots fell back on the old French alliance, and Henry, who had been at peace with France for nearly twenty years, declared war on

his old rival Francis I (1543). Shortly after the conclusion of peace (1546) both kings died.

Henry VIII had consolidated the Tudor despotism, the foundations of which his father had laid. The Parliaments which were held in his reign contained men of the trading classes, whose interests were bound up with the New Monarchy. The members of the Reformation Parliament, in particular, knew that it was to their interest to despoil the Church. Henry, grateful for their co-operation, gradually allowed them to increase their powers. For example, it was in 1543 that the Speaker first claimed for the Commons that right to 'freedom of speech' which was later to be regarded as one of the House's most valued privileges. Little did Henry foresee that the instrument which he thus rewarded the House of Commons—would, in the days of his descendants, be turned into a weapon to strike at the throne.

'I seem to see in him,' a great historian says of Henry VIII. 'a grand, gross figure, very far removed from ordinary human sympathies. . . . He was a man who might have been very great, and could under no circumstances be accounted less than great, but who would have been infinitely greater, and better, and more fortunate, if he could have lived for his people, and not for himself.'<sup>1</sup>

## 2. *Edward VI and the Protestant Religion*

### (i) *Protector Somerset.*

Henry VIII had been empowered by Parliament to regulate the succession to the Crown by his will. He left it first to his only son, Edward, then (if Edward had no heir) to his daughters Mary and Elizabeth; if neither Mary nor Elizabeth had heirs, the Crown was to go to the descendants of his younger sister Mary, Duchess of Suffolk. This will was carried out so far as the children of Henry VIII were concerned: the provision with regard to the Suffolk line was disregarded—the descendants of his elder sister, Margaret Queen of Scotland, inherited after Elizabeth.

Edward VI was a frail and precocious boy, not quite ten

<sup>1</sup> Stubbs, *Lectures on Mediaeval and Modern History*, xii.

Henry VIII  
and Parlia-  
ment

Will of  
Henry VIII

Edward VI  
1547-53

years old. The strong hand of the late king had just been able to control the two parties (Catholics and Protestants) who had struggled for supremacy during his last ten years. Henry had hoped there would be no abrupt change of policy at his death. But with the new king a minor, the factions broke loose, as they had done when Henry VI was a minor. The government was in the hands of a council of ministers nominated by the late king, of whom the chief was the Protestant Edward Seymour, Somerset Earl of Hertford, shortly afterwards created Duke of Somerset. He was the king's uncle, and the Council allowed him to assume the office of Protector (1547-9).

Scotland Somerset's first concern was with Scotland. Like the late king, he was strongly in favour of the union of the two countries; and at once followed up the question of the marriage of the two young monarchs, Edward VI and Mary Queen of Scots. This scheme was intended to end the age-long war between the two kingdoms. The Protector tried persuasion and failed, and then resorted to force. He invaded Scotland; and, with the help of Italian musketeers, he won a crushing but fruitless victory at Pinkie Clough (1547). Somerset used his victory with moderation, for he still hoped for a settlement. But the Scots would have none of the English alliance, and they shipped their young queen off to France, where she was betrothed to the Dauphin.

Battle of  
Pinkie, 1547

Policy of  
Somerset

The first Parliament of the reign was summoned that autumn, on the Protector's return from the north. Its chief work was to pass laws which showed that the reformers, headed by Somerset, intended to abandon Henry VIII's religious position. At Somerset's bidding an Act was passed repealing the late king's treason and heresy laws (including the Act of Six Articles). The Act went farther; it also repealed the Statute 'De Heretico Comburendo', under which Lollards and others, from the days of Henry IV onwards, had been put to death by burning. With the help of these laws Somerset meant to use his power to modify Henry VIII's harsh system. During the three years he was in power no political prisoner was tortured in the Tower, and no restrictions were placed on the activity of the printing-press or the publication of the Scriptures. It was not this first experiment in mercy that caused the Protector's fall. It was when he went farther, and took to cham-



pioneering peasants against rich men, that he found stern reality too much for him.

One effect of the repeal of the heresy laws was immediately felt. England was soon invaded by a host of foreign preachers—Reformers from Geneva, Zurich, and Germany, as well as Italians, Poles, Flemings, and Frenchmen—all ready to propagate their views. This situation had its disadvantages, and Englishmen were confused by a babel of strange voices preaching strange doctrines.

The Protector was not rash enough to go as far as some of the Protestant zealots wished in breaking away from the old Catholic practices. However, it was felt desirable to introduce a form of worship in the English language. The result was the drawing up of the beautiful English liturgy known as the First Prayer Book of Edward VI (1549)—one of the greatest treasures in the English language. It was largely the work of Cranmer. With very few changes it was a translation from the old Latin service-books, and it showed few traces of the teaching of the German Reformers who were now crowding into England to escape the triumphant Charles V. In order to enforce its uniform use all over the land, Parliament passed the First Act of Uniformity (1549). The use of the new service, however, provoked much discontent, especially in Devon and Cornwall, where there was a rebellion. To Catholics, above all in Ireland, Wales, and Cornwall, the new Prayer Book was, as the Cornishmen said, 'but like a Christmas game, and we Cornishmen (whereof certain of us understand not English) utterly refuse this new English'.

Meanwhile the Protector turned his attention to one of the crying evils of the time—the results of the 'enclosures',<sup>1</sup> which

<sup>1</sup> There were various kinds of *enclosure*: (a) the turning of arable into pasture, and the enclosing of this new sheep-run by a hedge; (b) the seizure by private owners of the 'commons' surrounding the villages. The first process resulted in loss of employment by the ploughmen, reapers, &c.—most economic changes, which may be beneficial in the long run, cause unemployment for a time—the second in loss of village property and peasants' rights. (c) There was a third type of enclosure, by which holdings of scattered strips in the common fields were brought together, by exchange, and fenced, but remained arable. This resulted in improved farming and was entirely beneficial.

First Prayer  
Book of  
Edward VI  
1549

First Act of  
Uniformity  
1549

The En-  
closure evil

had been slowly going on ever since the Black Death. Sir Thomas More had complained of the misery caused by the enclosing of arable land for sheep-farming—'sheep were eating men'. Since More's time the new landowners had proved worse than the monks. The men who had fastened on the spoils of the monasteries were busy depopulating the English countryside. The lord who turned his arable land into pasture thereby doubled his income. The wool trade was booming, the sheep-farmers were prospering, but many peasants and small farmers were being crushed out of existence. Many writers of the time bear witness to this fact. Hugh Latimer, Bishop of Worcester, preaching before the king, told him that

'the honest ploughman is in Christ equal with the greatest prince that is. Let them, therefore, have sufficient to maintain them, and to find them their necessities. They must have cattle, as horses to draw their plough, and for carriage of things to the markets, and kine for their milk and cheese which they must live upon and pay their rents. These cattle must have pasture, and pasture they cannot have if the land be taken in and *enclosed* from them. Therefore, for God's love restore sufficient unto them, and search no more for the cause of rebellion.'

Latimer was himself the son of a small but prosperous yeoman farmer, whereas he who 'now hath the farm is not able to do anything for his prince, for himself, nor for his children, or give a cup of drink to the poor'.

For this evil, Somerset tried to devise a remedy. He set up a Commission (1549) to inquire into the spread of enclosures, and prepared measures to check it. But he soon found that the gentry, whose representatives sat in Parliament, were too strong for him. By all means in their power they hindered the work of the Commissioners. They made false returns: for example, a couple of oxen were put in a sheep-run, which was then returned as land devoted to the fattening of cattle; or a single furrow was ploughed across a sheep enclosure, and the land then returned as arable.

Ket's Rebel-  
lion, 1549

But while the gentry were holding up the Protector's good work, the peasantry rose in rebellion against the social evils of the time. The chief of these were enclosures, and the debasing of the coinage—begun by the late king and continued after

him—which upset wages and prices and caused great distress. The revolt began in the west, spread through Gloucester and Dorset to most of the Midland shires, and came to a head in Norfolk. There Robert Ket, a prosperous farmer and tanner, who had taken the side of the oppressed peasantry, raised a rebel army and captured Norwich. In the midst of the confusion the French—urged by the Scots who were anxious to avenge Pinkie—seized this opportune moment to declare war on England (August 1549). The Council chose John Dudley, Earl of Warwick, to put down Ket's rebellion, and he defeated the rebels near Mousehold Hill, outside Norwich. Even now, Somerset was prepared to recognize the justice of the rebels' cause, but the Council were determined on his fall. He was deposed from his office as Protector, arrested, and sent to the Tower (October 1549).

Somerset  
deposed

Somerset occupies an important place in English history as the first Protestant ruler of this country. The main blot on his character was his greediness in profiting by the destruction of the monasteries and other Church property.<sup>1</sup> However, the sincerity of his Protestant principles, his milder laws, his plea for justice for the peasants, and the idea of a union between England and Scotland, are evidence of his lofty aims; and in those aims he showed himself one of the most far-seeing statesmen of Tudor times.

(ii) *Northumberland.*

The Earl of Warwick was now the virtual head of the Government. He was the son of Dudley, Henry VII's unpopular minister whom Henry VIII had put to death. In character he was as unscrupulous and self-seeking, as lacking in principle as Thomas Cromwell. He never took the title of Protector, but he had great influence over the young king, and ruled in his name. At first he was reconciled to Somerset, who was released from the Tower and re-admitted to the Council. But the Catholic members of the Council were expelled, and Warwick prepared to launch out on a vigorous policy of so-called religious reform.

John  
Dudley

<sup>1</sup> Out of his ill-gotten gains he built Somerset House (not the present building, which dates from the end of the eighteenth century).

**Dissolution of the chantries and guilds** Throughout Edward VI's reign, and especially under Warwick, there occurred what has been called the 'Great Pillage of the Church', when, in Bishop Latimer's words, 'thousands became Gospellers for the sake of the Church lands'. The chantries, the guilds, the churches themselves were all attacked. The chantries were chapels where Masses for the souls of the departed were said—to which Protestant feeling was opposed.<sup>1</sup> The chantry priests had also kept schools, and had thus performed a real service to the community. Similarly, the guilds had been for centuries intimately connected, as benefit or friendly societies, with the daily life of the people; and they suffered a severe blow when the portion of their property devoted to religious uses was confiscated (from 1547). Many of the craft guilds survived, including the powerful City Guilds of London, which remain to this day. But the guild system of industry was already giving way to more competitive and modern methods.

**Spoilation of the churches** Still more upsetting to the ordinary folk of village and town was the spoiling of the churches themselves. Many were robbed of their rich vestments, their jewels of gold and silver, crosses, candlesticks, and chalices, and even of their lead roofing. The pictures on the walls, by which the Church had instructed simple folk in their faith, were blotted out, and the churches were white-limed and painted with texts. The images (which to Protestant zealots were idols) were defaced and the rood-screens pulled down. Thus, many things of beauty and solace were wantonly destroyed. When the chantries and religious guilds were suppressed, the proceeds were supposed to be used for building schools and relieving the poor. Some old schools were re-founded and became known as King Edward VI's Grammar Schools. But only a comparatively small part of the spoils was in fact used for the general good of the community. The rest went to replenish the impoverished Treasury, and the lands were sold to the 'new rich', the spoilers of the monasteries. Moreover most of the Church festivals were done away with, and this meant that the workers lost the many

<sup>1</sup> The Act for the suppression of the chantries was actually passed in the last year of Henry VIII's reign, shortly before his death. Henry had also attacked the superstitious use of images.

holidays—'holy days' on which work was forbidden—that had relieved their long hours of labour in the Middle Ages.

In foreign affairs the new Government was scarcely happy. Peace was made with France and Scotland, but Boulogne was surrendered for half the sum which the French had promised, and the English strongholds in Scotland were given up without compensation. The French were left masters of Scotland, with the Dauphin wedded to the Scottish queen, and Henry II of France boasting that he ruled three realms—France, Scotland, and England.

It was natural that the men who resented the reversal of the Protector's policy should gather round the fallen minister. But Warwick, whom Edward created (1551) Duke of Northumberland, decided that he was now strong enough to strike down his old rival. Somerset was arrested and tried on a charge of high treason, 'the more pitied by the people for the known hatred of Northumberland against him'. He was found guilty and executed (January 1552).

Execution  
of Somerset  
1552

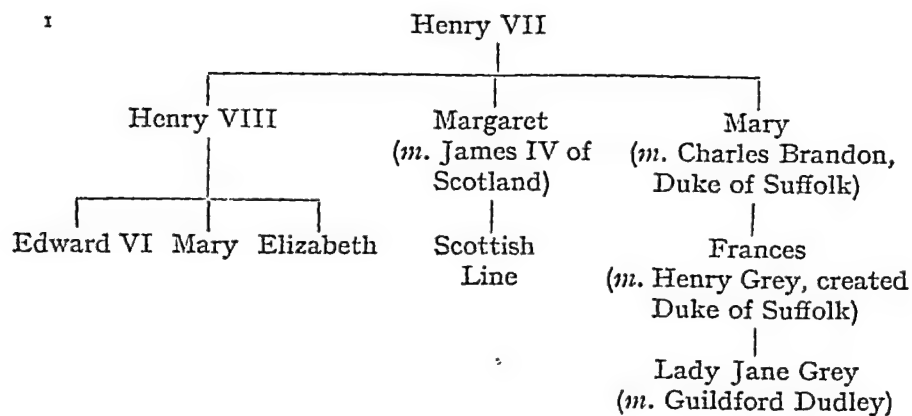
Northumberland was not a Protestant by conviction; but he pursued an extreme policy of reform, partly in order to please the Protestants, and partly owing to the need for money. Bishops who objected were deprived of their sees, and among these were Bonner, bishop of London, and Gardiner, bishop of Winchester. Revenues from the sees of deposed bishops, chantry lands, Church plate—all were used to augment the Government's resources. Edward VI himself was a sincere and ardent reformer, and greatly interested in advancing the new doctrines. This was one of the means Northumberland used to maintain his hold over Edward's mind. In 1552 a Second Prayer Book was forced on the people, very different from the First: it was drawn up under the influence of German Protestants, and in it the Communion Service is no longer 'commonly called the Mass'. Its use was enforced by a Second Act of Uniformity. The following year the Forty-two Articles, defining the doctrine of the English Protestant Church, were drawn up by Cranmer, and all clergymen had to subscribe to this summary of doctrines. At the same time the destruction of Church property, and the enclosing of the commons and other lands, went on apace.

Second  
Prayer Book  
1552

The Government was extremely unpopular in the country. Fearing risings, Northumberland instructed various local gentry to raise troops of cavalry. Just as the Pilgrimage of Grace called into being a strong Council of the North, so the risings of Edward VI's reign led to the remodelling of the militia under Lord-Lieutenants of counties, who still have a place in our system of government.

<sup>Edward VI's Will</sup> The rule of Northumberland depended on the continuance of the king's favour. His influence over Edward showed no signs of abating, but, unfortunately for him, the king's health failed and it soon became obvious that he had not much longer to live. In 1553 Edward was persuaded to make a will, by which he 'devised' the Crown to his second cousin, Lady Jane Grey, a daughter of the Duchess of Suffolk, who was herself a granddaughter of Henry VII.<sup>1</sup> The claims of Lady Jane, as compared with those of the Princesses Mary and Elizabeth, or of the Scottish line, were obviously weak. But Northumberland was determined that the Catholic Mary, Edward's elder sister and real heiress, should not succeed. In order to strengthen his own position he married Lady Jane to one of his sons, Guildford Dudley, and then forced the Council to agree to the arbitrary choice of Jane as the next sovereign of England.

<sup>Death of Edward VI 1553</sup> In July 1553 Edward VI died, exclaiming (he was only fifteen), 'Oh, my Lord God, deliver this country from papistry, and defend Thy true religion'. Northumberland at once had his daughter-in-law proclaimed queen. He then marched north with an army to meet Mary, who was rallying her adherents in



the eastern counties, where the memory of Northumberland's suppression of Ket's rebellion was still vivid. But while he was at Cambridge news was brought that the Council at London, in his absence, had repudiated 'Queen Jane' and declared for Queen Mary. Then he knew that the game was up and surrendered. Mary entered London amid the rejoicings of a city which was delighted to know that the rule of the hated duke was over.

Lady Jane  
Grey

So ended for a time the attempt to make England Protestant. Many of the reformers, like Bishop Latimer of Worcester, were conscientious and able men, anxious to build up a Protestant Church in England. But there were others, rogues and profiteers, who called themselves Protestants, and these by their extreme measures had shocked the mass of the people.

### 3. *Mary and the Catholic Revival*

Queen Mary, the first woman to rule England as queen in her own right, was thirty-six years old. The daughter of Catherine of Aragon, she looked back on a life passed, from girlhood, in bitter humiliation. Her father's cruel treatment of her mother, and the persecution which she herself had suffered, first from her father and then from Northumberland, were memories which had burnt themselves deep into her soul. She was a woman of limited understanding, but of deep piety and sincerity. Her main object, now that she had become queen, was to restore, to its full medieval power, the Church to whose authority she herself gave an unquestioning obedience. But if she dreamt of restoring Church property, Mary little knew the character of the men who had grown rich under Henry VIII and Edward VI.

Mary  
1553-8

The reign began in a glow of popularity, which the queen did not tarnish by undue severity. Northumberland was executed as a traitor, Lady Jane and her husband were sent to the Tower, but most of those implicated in the duke's plot were pardoned.

Execution  
of North-  
umberland

Mary's next action was to deprive Archbishop Cranmer and the leading Protestant bishops—Latimer, Hooper, and Ridley—of their sees. They were all sent to the Tower. At the same time Gardiner and Bonner were restored as bishops of Winchester and London. Mary's first Parliament was then

summoned and persuaded to repeal the Act of Uniformity; the members refused, however, to obey the queen's behest to restore the papal supremacy. Meanwhile the country was alarmed by the announcement of the queen's intention to marry Philip of Hapsburg, the son of her cousin, the Emperor Charles V.

But Mary's heart was set on this marriage, for it represented the reversal of English policy from the time of her mother's divorce. She proceeded with her plan, regardless of the wishes of her people. She was entirely blind to the fact that English national feeling was alarmed at the prospect of England's becoming a province of Spain. Her mission was to bring back England to the Catholic fold, and she saw in the Spanish alliance a means to that end.

Wyatt's  
Rebellion  
1554     Feeling in the country provoked a revolt, led by Sir Thomas Wyatt. The object of the rising was to dethrone Mary in favour of her sister Elizabeth, who was to be married to Edward Courtenay, a great-grandson of Edward IV. But Courtenay himself betrayed the plot to Mary's ministers, and in spite of Wyatt's skilful leadership the rebellion was suppressed (1554). Elizabeth's life was at this time in considerable danger, for the imperial ambassador urged her execution. She was sent to the Tower for some months, and was only with difficulty restored to the queen's good graces. Many executions followed the suppression of Wyatt's rebellion. Among the victims were the innocent Lady Jane Grey, her husband, Guildford Dudley, and her father, the Duke of Suffolk (1554).

The effect of Wyatt's rising and its failure was to encourage the queen to proceed with her double scheme—the Spanish marriage and the restoration of the papal authority. Another Parliament was summoned and dissolved (1554), for Mary could not persuade the members to carry out her wishes and repeal the Act of Supremacy. When elections for a third Parliament were held—in the same year—she instructed the Lord-Lieutenants and sheriffs to admonish the people to choose members 'as the old laws require, and of the wise, grave and Catholic sort'. This tampering with freedom of election (which was no unusual thing in those days) may have been partly successful; at any rate this third Parliament was more sub-



missive to the queen's will. Perhaps, too, the members were overawed by the presence of a new king of England—a monarch who was soon to be the first prince in Europe and the leader of a 'Counter-Reformation' devoted to the destruction of the Protestant religion.

Philip of Spain landed in England in the summer of 1554; he was married to Mary by Gardiner in Winchester Cathedral with full Catholic ritual. Another and no less important visitor arrived soon after the marriage; this was Cardinal Pole,<sup>1</sup> made Papal Legate to England, and entrusted with the mission of reconciling England with the Pope. At a solemn session of Parliament, in the presence of the queen, who stood weeping for joy, Cardinal Pole absolved the English nation and readmitted it to the union of the Catholic Church. 'To-day,' some said, 'we are born again.' Parliament then repealed the Act of Supremacy and the rest of the anti-papal laws of Henry VIII. But neither queen nor cardinal could persuade Parliament to restore the spoils of the monasteries, chantries, or guilds. The queen told them: 'I value the peace of my conscience more than ten such crowns as that of England.' But the 40,000 families that had shared in the plunder held fast to their lands; indeed Parliament had not agreed to Pole's coming to England until the queen had promised not to restore the Church lands.

Marriage of  
Philip and  
Mary, 1554

England re-  
united to  
Rome

This same Parliament re-enacted the Statute 'De Heretico Comburendo', which Somerset had repealed. The next year (1555) saw the beginning of the persecution—the burning of the Protestant martyrs, which has given to Mary's reign an evil reputation. But, severe as the persecution was, this brief phase cannot compare with the terror which some other European countries endured—for example, the earlier crusade against Jews and Moors in Spain under Mary's maternal

The Pro-  
testant  
Martyrs  
1555-8

<sup>1</sup> Cardinal Pole was a member of a singularly unfortunate family. He was a grandson of George, Duke of Clarence, who had been murdered in the Tower by order of his brother, Edward IV. Pole's uncle, Clarence's son Warwick, was the innocent victim of Henry VII's cruelty (1499); see p. 317. In the next reign the Pole family was ruined; the Cardinal's elder brother, Lord Montague, was executed in 1539, while two years later his mother, Lady Salisbury, who was over 70 years of age, was also sacrificed to the whim of Henry VIII.

grandparents, or the later burning and slaughtering of Protestants under her husband's rule in the Netherlands. And, whatever the cruelties of Henry VIII and Mary, England was at least spared the horrors of a religious war.

The Marian Persecution (1555-8) continued for the rest of the reign. The first to suffer was John Rogers,<sup>1</sup> who was so acclaimed by the spectators that 'it seemed as though he were being taken to his wedding'. Altogether about 300 persons of both sexes were burnt to death during these three years; most of them were obscure people up and down the country, though many suffered in London at Smithfield. The chief victims were the Protestant bishops. Bishop Hooper suffered at Gloucester; Bishops Latimer and Ridley at Oxford, where they were put to death in the presence of the Vice Chancellor. 'Be of good comfort, Master Ridley,' said Latimer, as the fire was lit, 'Play the man; we shall this day light such a candle, by God's grace, in England, as I trust shall never be put out.'

Martyrdom  
of Cranmer  
1556 Thomas Cranmer, formerly Archbishop of Canterbury, was also burnt at Oxford (1556). He recanted his Protestant opinions after he was sentenced to death, but even then the queen refused to spare his life. On the day of his execution a sermon was preached in St. Mary's Church, at the conclusion of which Cranmer was expected once more to deny his former opinions. But suddenly he refused to do so; instead he said:

'Now here I renounce and refuse, as things written with my hand contrary to the truth which I thought in my heart, and written for fear of death, . . . all such papers as I have signed with my hand since my degradation, wherein I have written many things untrue. And forasmuch as my hand offended, my hand shall first be punished for it; for when I come to the fire, it shall be first burned. As for the Pope, I refuse him, as Christ's enemy and Antichrist, with all his false doctrine.'

But when his opponents heard him speak thus, they began to cry out: 'Stop the heretic's mouth and take him away.' So he was brought to the fire. 'And when the wood was kindled (says an old account) and the fire began to burn he put his right hand into the flame, which he held so steadfast that all men might see his hand burned before his body was touched.' His

<sup>1</sup> See p. 352, footnote.

all their works. It was the Spaniards who had subdued Italy, and conquered Paul's native city of Naples. He now excommunicated King Philip and called upon the French to help expel the Spaniards from Italy. So Mary, most devout of the Pope's servants, now found herself joining a league against the Holy Father at the bidding of an excommunicate husband. The war was extremely unpopular in England. Its only result was the loss of Calais—'a jewel useless and costly, but dearly prized'—the last link with Crecy.

The loss of Calais (January 1558) was a bitter blow to the nation's pride—no less bitter to the dying queen. Men's thoughts, she well knew, were turning to her young sister Elizabeth, in the hope of better times. And Elizabeth, she knew even better, would undo all her work. Nevertheless, under pressure from her ministers, she acknowledged Elizabeth as her successor. Not long afterwards, one dark November morning, messengers rode out from St. James's Palace towards Hatfield, where a wise young woman was waiting. The messengers hailed the accession of Queen Elizabeth. The reign of Mary was over. Honest but misguided, courageous but unfortunate, the first Tudor queen had failed to solve the problems of a new age.

Loss of  
Calais, 1558

Death of  
Mary, 1558

#### 4. *Elizabeth and the Church Settlement*

Elizabeth, the daughter of Anne Boleyn, was born (1533) at a time when her father was taking the fateful steps which led to the breach with Rome. During the reigns of her father, brother, and sister she had seen the English Reformation pass through three stages, and with each of these in turn she herself had to conform. First, there was Henry VIII's political reform, a Catholic England without the Pope. Secondly, there came, under Edward VI, the Protestant advance influenced by foreign reformers, and marked by the abandonment of the old ritual and by the issue of the Prayer Book in English, as well as by a shameful pillage of the churches. Thirdly, there was the Catholic Revival under Mary and Philip, and the burnings that made the Reformation live. The fourth stage fell to Elizabeth—the settlement of the Church after these three violent changes which could not fail to upset the country. England in 1558 had

Elizabeth  
1558-1603

sunk as low as in 1485; and Elizabeth's first task, like Henry VII's, was to settle the country. She scorned 'the falsehood of extremes'; both her character and her policy favoured compromise—and a Church that tried to find room for all, Catholic and Protestant. Her great minister, William Cecil, was of the same way of thinking. Cecil had been Protector Somerset's secretary; he had been Protestant under Edward and had gone to Mass under Mary. It was Elizabeth and Cecil, who, with Parliament's aid, arranged the Church Settlement of 1559.

First, the Marian legislation which had reconciled England with the Pope was repealed, and a new Act of Supremacy was passed (1559) declaring the Sovereign to be 'supreme of all persons and causes, ecclesiastical as well as civil, within this realm'. Elizabeth avoided her father's title of Supreme Head, and instead became Supreme Governor, which was less offensive to Catholics and acknowledged that 'the ministry of God's Word and of the Sacraments'<sup>1</sup> does not belong to the Crown. Nevertheless, the right of the Crown to control the Church was closely guarded. The royal supremacy was very real, and Elizabeth resented any attempt by Parliament to advise her on Church policy.

Secondly, the use of the Second Prayer Book of Edward VI, with modifications in favour of the older practices,<sup>2</sup> was made compulsory by the Act of Uniformity (1559). This Act compelled the clergy to use the Prayer Book, and it also compelled the laity to go to church and hear the English service read. 'All and every person within this realm shall diligently and faithfully . . . resort to their parish church . . . upon every Sunday and Holy Days, and then and there to abide, orderly and soberly, during the time of the Common Prayer, Readings, and other service of God there to be ministered.' The penalty for non-attendance was a fine of twelve pence (say ten shillings in our money), 'for the maintenance of the poor'.

<sup>1</sup> See Article XXXVII of the Thirty-nine Articles. The 42 Articles of 1552 took their final form in the 39 Articles of 1571, which were printed in the Prayer Book and to which every clergyman of the Church of England had to subscribe (and still subscribes).

<sup>2</sup> See, for example, the Communion Service, in which the Catholic and the Protestant doctrines were thrown together.

By these twin Acts of Supremacy and Uniformity the main lines of Elizabeth's Church Settlement were laid down. The papal supremacy was once again overthrown, and the English service was made uniform and compulsory. To see that her orders in religious matters were carried out, the queen appointed the Court of High Commission, a kind of Privy Council for the Church, and to some known as 'the Protestant Inquisition'. This Court punished absentees from church, dealt with clerical offences, and administered the oath under the Act of Supremacy to all judges, mayors, and other officials. It met first in 1559, and it deprived of their offices the whole bench of Romanist bishops and about 190 of the clergy.

In many ways the settlement was on moderate lines. The oath, under the new Act of Supremacy, was demanded only from the clergy and from persons in official positions, not from all subjects. Again, certain parts of Edward's Prayer Book, which were specially offensive to Romanists, were omitted (e.g. the insulting clause in the Litany which referred to 'the tyranny of the Bishop of Rome and all his detestable enormities'). The settlement, Elizabeth hoped, would meet the wishes of the main body of English men and women. But, even for those who still clung to the papal supremacy or objected to the English service, there was to be no active persecution. The sword and the stake were not to be the normal engines of the new government. Matthew Parker, Elizabeth's first Archbishop of Canterbury (1559-75), was careful not to make too many Catholics into traitors by tendering the oath to them a second time if they refused it at the first. Unhappily this moderation did not last throughout the reign, for reasons which will appear presently.<sup>1</sup>

The legislation of 1559 may be regarded as a settlement in two ways. First, it laid down the lines on which the Church of England has proceeded ever since; secondly, it brought peace for the time being. There were various religious wars in Europe during the second half of the sixteenth century, but not in England. But, if the settlement of 1559 ended the long struggles of the past twenty-five years, in another way it opened a new struggle, which lasted a hundred years. In practice, the settle-

Character  
of the  
Elizabethan  
Settlement

<sup>1</sup> See below, p. 390.

ment was opposed by two parties—the Papists and the Puritans.<sup>1</sup> By the end of Elizabeth's reign there were three religious parties in England—the Anglicans, who supported the Elizabethan settlement; the Papists, who rejected the Act of Supremacy; and the Puritans, who wished for further Protestant reforms. The double struggle, between Anglicans and Catholics on the one hand and between Anglicans and Puritans on the other, is the key-note to the period; and for a hundred years, from Elizabeth to Charles II (1558–1660), the conflict of these three parties is a main theme of English history. During this time the party in power did not recognize that the other two parties had any legal right to exist. Such lack of tolerance leads, in time, to revolution. Elizabeth, using all her arts, was able to avoid it; but it came under the Stuarts.

### 5. *The Scottish Reformation*

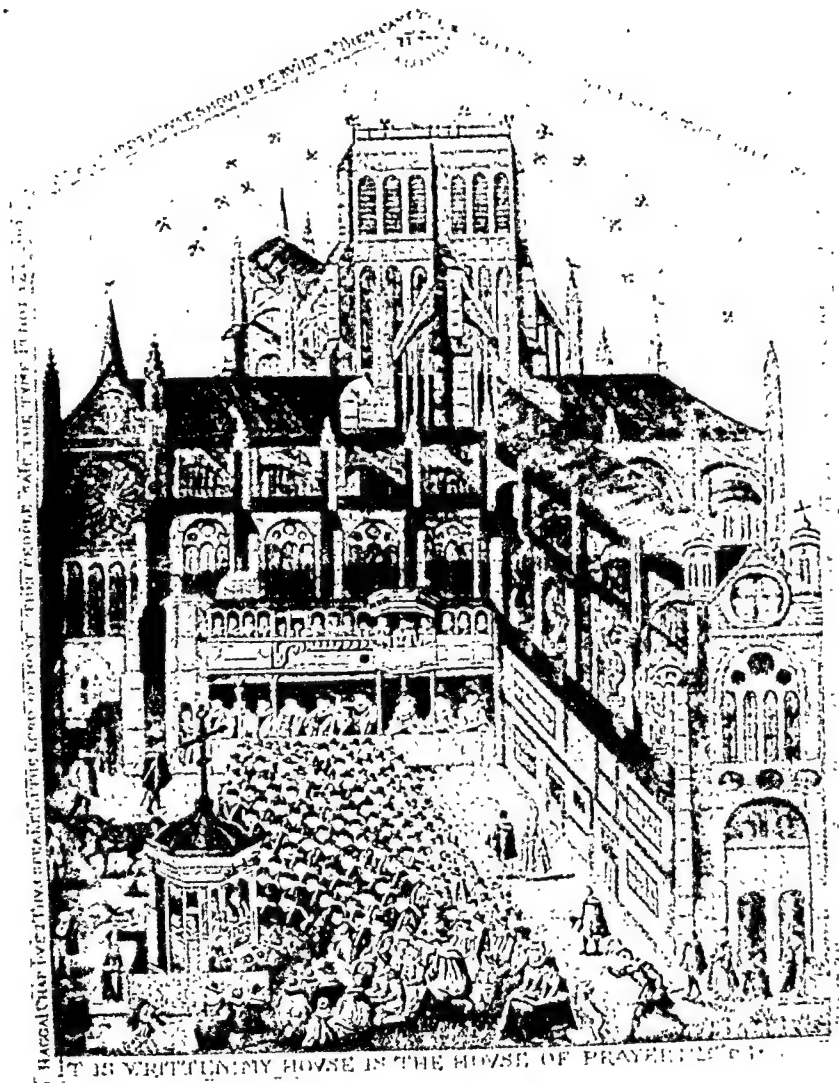
#### (i) *The House of Stuart.*

The story of the Reformation in Scotland was closely bound up with the fortunes of England and with the future of Great Britain. Before tracing its course a brief retrospect of Scottish history under the House of Stuart is desirable.

Robert I (Bruce), the victor of Bannockburn (1314), was succeeded by his son, David II, who left no heir. The succession therefore passed to the unlucky House of Stuart, through David's sister Margaret, wife of Walter Stuart, whose ancestors had been High Stewards (whence Stuarts) of Scotland. Margaret's son was Robert II, the first of the Stuart kings (1370–90). After Robert II came Robert III, whose eldest son was killed by the nobles; the other son, James, was captured by the English and spent many years in captivity. Then follows the 'mournful procession of the five Jameses'. All these kings, except James V, who died of a broken heart, came to a violent end. All of them except James IV (who succeeded at eighteen) came to the throne as children, and therefore four reigns began with a minority and a regency. This was a great evil in days when a turbulent people needed a strong ruler. The melancholy tale of weak government,

The Five  
Jameses

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter XVII, Sects. 3 and 7.



### RELIGION IN THE AGE OF ELIZABETH

An open-air sermon at Paul's Cross. Old St. Paul's, shown in this picture, was the medieval cathedral that was burned in the Fire of London (1666)

of Bombay in which the original

anarchy, and murder continued with little interruption throughout the fifteenth century.

At the time of his father's death James I was eleven years old, and a prisoner in England. When, after twenty years' captivity, he returned to his native land, he tried to reduce the country to order. But a party of barons broke into his castle one night and murdered him. James II, succeeding at six, grew up to quarrel with the powerful House of Douglas; he invited the chief of the Douglasses to dine with him, and then murdered him in cold blood. James III, succeeding at eight, grew up to suffer the usual fate. He was a cultured man, who had nothing in common with the wild 'lairds' of Scotland. One of them, Archibald Douglas, rebelled against him, and defeated him in battle. From this field James III rode away wounded, and took refuge in a cottage. There, as his enemies gave out, he 'happenit to be slain'.

The reign of James IV (1488-1513) was less disorderly, chiefly because for once there was no royal minority. For a time there seemed to be a prospect both of peace at home and, what was equally unusual, peace with England; for James IV married Margaret, daughter of Henry VII. But later on he quarrelled with his brother-in-law, Henry VIII, turned away from the English connexion, and renewed the old alliance with France. He was slain, with most of his nobles, on the bloody field of Flodden (1513).

His son, James V (1513-42), succeeded at the age of two; there was the usual long minority. When he grew up he drifted into war with his uncle Henry VIII. He sent an army across the border, but it was utterly routed near Carlisle, at the battle of Solway Moss (1542). James died three weeks later, leaving an infant daughter to succeed him—Mary Queen of Scots. After Somerset's victory at Pinkie (1547), as we have seen, Mary was sent to France to marry the Dauphin, afterwards Francis II. In 1561 she returned to Scotland, a widow of nineteen.

Scotland, in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, had not progressed much beyond the level of the thirteenth. The lawless lairds took advantage of the weakness of the monarchy to pursue their own private feuds and ambitions. Murder was an

Death of  
James V  
1542

Mary



everyday occurrence, and the country was a prey to feudal barbarism. But beyond the feudal Lowlands was an even more uncivilized land—the wild north of the savage Highlanders, who could not be brought under even such government as existed in the Lowlands. It was a country with these traditions which was suddenly confronted with the problems of the Reformation.

(ii) *John Knox.*

The condition of the Church in Scotland, during the later medieval period, was as deplorable as that of the country. The Church possessed too large a share of the wealth of a poor land: it was said to own almost half the revenue of the kingdom. The younger sons of nobles, and the illegitimate sons of kings, were greedy for Church lands, which they obtained in the most shameless way. A son of James IV was already Archbishop of St. Andrews when he was killed at Flodden at the age of twenty. James V persuaded Pope Clement VII to bestow the abbeys of Kelso, Melrose, and Holyrood upon three of his illegitimate sons. This shameless traffic in Church property was one of the reasons why the Scottish Reformation, when it came, was so violent.

The Church  
in Scotland

The scandalous life of the Scottish clergy was, no doubt, connected with unsuitable appointments to high positions in the Church. A Council at Edinburgh (1549) complained of 'the corruption of morals and profane lewdness of life in churchmen of almost all ranks, together with crass ignorance of literature and of all the liberal arts'.<sup>1</sup> Men who could hardly read or write were admitted to the priesthood, which they then disgraced by the evil manner of their lives. It is a black picture.

The spread of heresy in Scotland—where some Lollards had been burnt—may be traced to the Lollard preachers of the fifteenth century. In the reign of James V, with the introduction of Tyndale's New Testament (c. 1525), the new reforming doctrines began to spread. One of the most prominent Protestant martyrs was Patrick Hamilton, a great-grandson of James II, who was burnt at St. Andrews (1528). Nearly twenty years later George Wishart, a prominent preacher, was also

Reformers  
in Scotland

<sup>1</sup> Rait, *History of Scotland*.

burnt at the stake. His friends in revenge burst into the castle of St. Andrews and murdered Cardinal Beaton, the head of the Scottish Church (1546). The Scottish tradition of the blood-feud was thus applied to religious disputes.

**John Knox** After the murder of Beaton his assassins defended the castle; but after two months they surrendered to a French fleet, which had been sent to help the government. Among the prisoners was a Protestant named John Knox, who now spent a year and a half as a slave on a French galley. After his release Knox went to England, where he became a chaplain of Edward VI. Then, on the accession of Mary Tudor, he made a journey through France and Switzerland. At Geneva he met and became the disciple of Calvin, the famous reformer. He paid a short visit to Scotland in 1555; four years later he came back for good, to become the leader of the Scottish Reformation.

**Calvin** John Calvin (or rather, Cauvin) was a Frenchman who, after the death of Luther (1546), led the Protestant advance from Geneva. That city he ruled with a rod of iron for twenty years till his death (1564). Calvin set out to create not only a new Church but a new world, in which men should be compelled to live and act like Christians. To him, the final authority in the State was not the prince (as with Luther) but the community—the 'congregation', ruled by elders or 'presbyters', not by bishops and priests, for whom Calvin had no use. His followers in Scotland and England (and later in America) were known as Presbyterians and Puritans; in France as Huguenots; and parts of Germany and the Netherlands preferred his creed to Luther's. Under his rule Geneva dealt sternly with sinners or heretics. To Knox it was 'the most perfect school of Christ that ever was on earth since the days of the Apostles'; to the Pope it was 'a nest of devils'; to many others it seemed, with its stern ideals, the home of a harsh, gloomy, and tyrannical system.

**Mary Queen of Scots and France** The progress of the Reformation in Scotland was bound up with politics. The influence of France was much resented by a section of the nobles. Not only was the queen living in France, married to the Dauphin (1558), but her French mother, Mary of Guise, was regent of Scotland. 'Scotland a province of France!' was the cry of these lords, who banded themselves

together in an association called the Lords of the Congregation. They allied themselves with the reformers, and so obtained the powerful aid of John Knox, who disliked the French almost as much as he disliked the Pope. He wrote a pamphlet called *The First Blast of the Trumpet against the Monstrous Regiment of Women*, which was an attack on the regiment (or rule) of the three queens, Mary of England, Mary of Scotland, and Mary of Guise. The first of these Marys soon afterwards died; her successor, Elizabeth, was so offended at the aspersions cast on her sex by Knox that she refused him a passage through England.

But, in the eventful year 1559, Knox landed at Leith. That summer he preached his famous sermon at Perth—'Burn the nests, and the rooks will fly'—which let loose the fury of the mob on the property of the Church. The result was an orgy of destruction in the Scottish monasteries (1560), like that which had already taken place in England. There was riot and destruction in Perth following Knox's sermon. A month later the Calvinist mob laid in ruins the noble Cathedral of St. Andrews, and all its priceless treasures were destroyed or carried away. Knox tried and failed to prevent the sack of the Abbey and Palace of Scone; he was no longer able to control the fury which he had unchained.

Mary Stuart was now Queen of France. Her husband, Francis II (1559-60), sent an army to hold the fortress of Leith, while Mary of Guise took refuge from the Lords of the Congregation in Edinburgh Castle. Now or never was the time for Elizabeth to intervene; the Scots lords had already begged her to do so. For once she cast aside her hesitations, and sent an English force to the north. English and Scots laid siege to Leith, and though the assault failed, the French garrison had to give way under pressure of famine. Just then the regent died. The French signed the Treaty of Edinburgh (1560) by which they undertook to leave Scotland, which, since the English also departed, was left in the hands of John Knox and the Lords of the Congregation. It was a signal triumph for the forces of the Reformation. To England the Treaty of Edinburgh was of great importance, for it ensured a Protestant Scotland, and, what was equally remarkable, a grateful

Knox re-  
turns, 1559

Treaty of  
Edinburgh  
1560

Scotland. Had affairs gone differently—had the French taken Edinburgh, had Mary of Guise lived to triumph over the Reformers, not only Scottish but English history might have been completely altered.

The Scot-  
tish Kirk

For Scotland the events of the year 1559-60 formed the turning-point in her history. The victorious reformers summoned a Parliament (1560), at which the papal authority was rejected, the monasteries dissolved, and the celebration of the Mass made illegal. Knox and his friends drew up a 'Confession of Faith', which established the Scottish Kirk, described by them as 'One company and multitude of men chosen by God, who rightly worship and embrace Him by true faith in Christ Jesus'. The Kirk was ruled by elders or presbyters, like Calvin's Congregation. Under Knox's successor, Andrew Melville, the office of bishop was declared unnecessary and illegal.

Mary re-  
turns, 1561

Thus the old religion was overthrown in Scotland, and the scarcely less ancient feud with England abandoned for ever. Elizabeth, much though she disliked religious excesses, was the friend of the new Scotland—but not of Scotland's queen, though at first she greeted her with fair words. Mary Stuart stood for all that her Calvinist subjects hated, which may be summed up in the two words, France and Rome. That year (1560) she ceased to be Queen of France, for her husband Francis II died suddenly (December). Next summer Mary took ship for her northern kingdom. She left behind the gay capital where she had reigned as Europe's most beautiful queen; she left the people, the customs, the religion she loved. She sailed north through the mists, to what was to be her home. But there was only the cold bleakness of Holyrood to welcome her—that and the harsh cries of outlandish men, some of whom hammered on the door of her private chapel, during the celebration of Mass, with cries of 'Death to the priest!' The stage was set for the Tragedy of Mary Stuart. 'Over her devoted head were to break the thunders of a ruining world; her weapons were but a fair face, and a subtle tongue, and an indomitable courage.'<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Andrew Lang, *History of Scotland*.

# DATE SUMMARY: EARLY TUDOR PERIOD (1485-1558)

BRITISH ISLES	AFRICA, ASIA, AMERICA	EUROPE
	HENRY VII (1485-1509)	
1485 ✕ Bosworth	1487 Diaz at the Cape	
	1492 COLUMBUS	
1494 Poynings' Law	1498 Vasco da Gama (India)	
1498 Colet met Erasmus	1500 Cabral (Brazil)	
1502 James IV (Scotland) married		
	HENRY VIII (1509-47)	
1513 ✕ Flodden. James IV <i>d.</i>		1515-47 Francis I (France)
1515 Wolsey Chancellor		1517 LUTHER'S THESES
1516 More's <i>Utopia</i>	1519 Cortez in Mexico	1519-56 Emp. Charles V
	1521 Magellan killed	1519 Leonardo da Vinci <i>d.</i>
1521 Henry VIII <i>Fidei Defensor</i>		1521 Diet of Worms
1527 DIVORCE QUESTION		1525 ✕ Pavia
1529-36 The Reformation Parlia- ment		1527 Sack of Rome
1530 Wolsey <i>d.</i>	1532 Pizarro (Peru)	
1534 Act of Supremacy	1534 Cartier (Canada)	
1535 More and Fisher executed		1540 Loyola (Society of Jesus)
1536-40 Dissolution of the Monas- teries		1541 Calvin at Geneva
1537 The Great Bible		1543 Copernicus <i>d.</i>
1542 James V (Scotland) <i>d.</i>		
	EDWARD VI (1547-53)	
1549 First Prayer Book		
Act of Uniformity		
1552 Somerset executed		
	MARY I (1553-8)	
1554 Philip and Mary married		1555 Peace of Augsburg
1556 Cranmer executed		1556 Emp. Charles V abdicated

## XVII

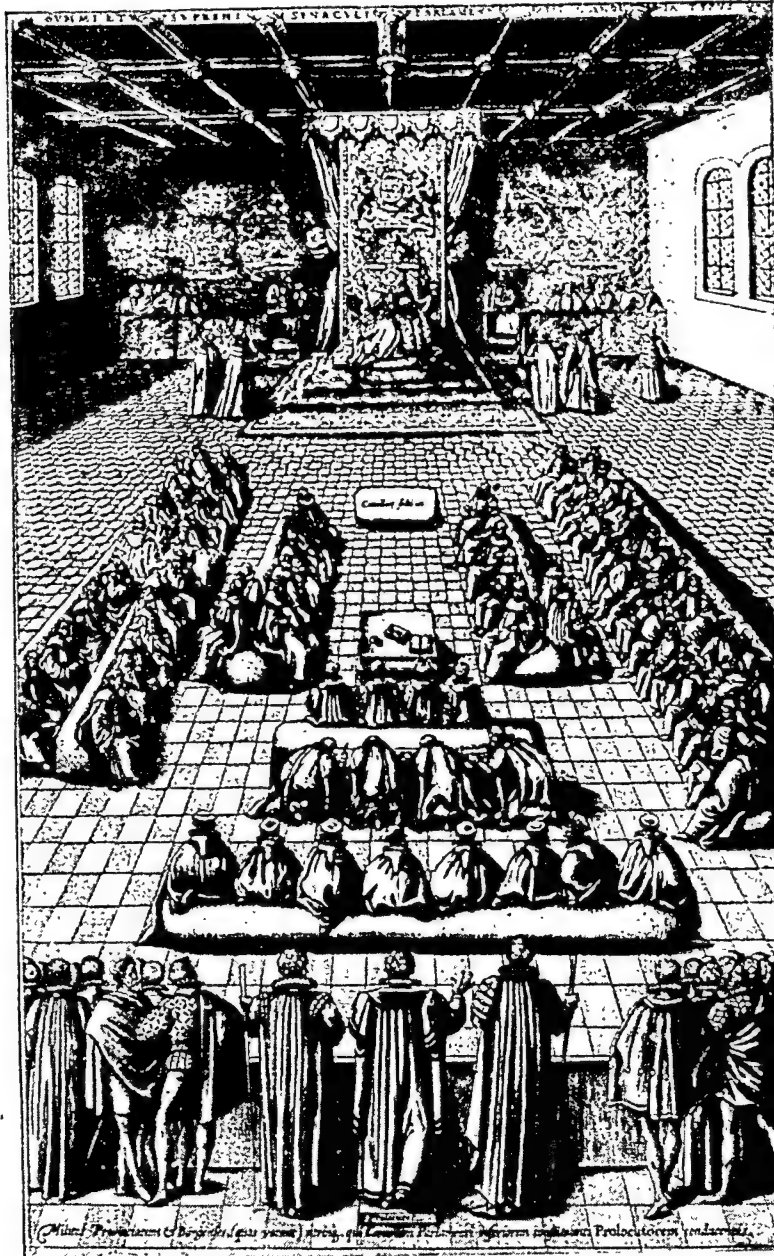
### THE POLICY OF ELIZABETH

#### 1. *Elizabeth: England and Europe*

Queen Elizabeth  
1558-1603 ENGLAND under Queen Elizabeth is an inspiring theme. The two great outbursts of activity which we associate with this reign—the adventures of the seamen, and the work of the poets and dramatists—are matters of which every Englishman can be proud; for it is no small thing to have become the acknowledged masters of the seas, and to have produced one of the world's greatest literatures. The success of the reign was due to the work of an able, scheming woman, helped by chosen ministers. Elizabeth won her way through a difficult and perilous situation, not by bold, straightforward methods, not by a display of force, but by a tortuous and cunning policy of which she was the supreme mistress. Her task was nothing less than to save and establish the religious and political independence of England.

Cecil and  
Walsingham Elizabeth's chief minister for forty years was William Cecil. He was principal Secretary till 1572, when he was made Treasurer, and given the title of Lord Burleigh. His successor as Secretary was Sir Francis Walsingham. Cecil stood for a moderate conservative policy, and he was averse from any activity which might provoke war with Spain. Walsingham, on the other hand, was a more ardent Protestant, and he was in favour of stern measures against English Catholics, even if such action should lead to a Spanish war; he was in fact the chief agent in tracking down the numerous plots against Elizabeth's life.

With all her faults, Elizabeth was passionately devoted to the national interests. She lacked the religious temperament; she played at making love; her gift was for politics, and in that she excelled. To put it another way—her religion, if she had any, was patriotism; if she loved anything, she loved England. She had enemies enough; for in the eyes of the Pope and of Catholic Europe her parents had never been married and



QUEEN ELIZABETH SITTING ENTHRONED IN PARLIAMENT (1584)

therefore she was illegitimate.<sup>1</sup> Her work cannot be understood without some appreciation of the perils which confronted England during the first thirty years of her reign.

The perils  
of the reign

During that period there were three grave dangers, any one of which might have overwhelmed England had Elizabeth died before her task was complete. First, since orthodox Catholics regarded Mary Stuart as the rightful Queen of England, there was the danger of civil war following a disputed succession; second, there was the danger of a religious war between Protestant and Catholic; third, there was the danger of foreign invasion and conquest. In practice, the third of these dangers eventually counteracted the other two; for in the face of foreign invasion (in the year of the Armada) all other quarrels were laid aside. But for the thirty years before the Armada the outbreak of civil war combined with religious strife was a constant menace. The queen's life alone stood between England and anarchy. If she had died—or had been assassinated—many of her subjects would have disputed the succession of Mary of Scotland, and the horrors of the Wars of the Roses might have returned. Not only this: Mary Stuart was a Catholic, and her succession might have been followed by an attempt to restore Romanism, which in its turn might have led to a 'religious' war. Englishmen had only to look across the Channel—to Holland or to France—to see what that would have meant. For in both those countries a hideous strife between Protestants and Catholics was being carried on during the greater part of Elizabeth's reign.

Elizabeth could not imitate her father, Henry VIII, by boldly destroying every obstacle which stood in her path. She was unsuited by temperament to do so, and the obstacles were too serious. The situation in Europe had changed considerably since the days of her father. In Henry's day Catholic Europe, demoralized and unprepared, was still staggering under the first onslaught of the Reformation. Since then there had been a civil war in Germany, followed by the religious Peace of

<sup>1</sup> Her mother's marriage had, in any case, been annulled (see above, p. 347). Both she and Mary succeeded to the throne under the will of Henry VIII, who had been empowered by Parliament to arrange the succession.



Augsburg (1555).<sup>1</sup> Germany thereafter remained more or less quiet; and her Protestant princes, secure in their own lands, did not become powerful outside the Empire. Catholic Spain, on the other hand, was enormously powerful; Philip II (1556–98) was at the head of one of the greatest empires the world had ever seen. Unlike his father, Charles V, he had no German Reformation to distract his attention. If he had been able to combine his power with that of the second greatest Catholic king in Europe—the King of France—there would have been little hope for the survival of English Protestantism, or indeed of English independence.

The  
Spanish  
power

A Catholic crusade against England seemed at one time quite possible. For the Catholic position had greatly improved, owing to the Counter-Reformation, that is, the Catholic Reformation. The Popes of this period were very different from the easy-going Popes of the Renaissance. Men like Pius V or Sixtus V put the interests of the Church above those of art or literature or temporal power. There was almost a revival of the great days of the medieval Papacy. This change in the character of the Papacy was accompanied by drastic reforms in the discipline of the Church. At the various sittings of the Council of Trent (1545–63), Catholic doctrine was more clearly defined, and the need for reform recognized. At the same time the Courts of Inquisition waged war on heretics in Italy and stamped out the remains of heresy in Spain. Besides all this the wonderful success of the Jesuits accounted for much. The Society of Jesus was founded by Ignatius Loyola (1540), an ardent and pious young Spanish nobleman. His followers became the vanguard of the Catholic crusade against heretics and infidels the world over. Their elaborate system of education enabled them to train the young to a life especially devoted to the papal service. There had been no such enthusiastic teachers and preachers as the Jesuits since the days of St. Dominic. So, with a reformed Papacy, a redisciplined Church, and an active crusade led by the Jesuits, it seemed that the great days of the Church of Rome were returning.<sup>2</sup>

The  
Counter-  
Reforma-  
tion

The Jesuits

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 340.

<sup>2</sup> The results of the Reformation struggle have been thus summed up: 'Hundreds, who could well remember Brother Martin (Luther) a devout

The chances that the Catholic powers would combine to dethrone Elizabeth and destroy English Protestantism were counteracted by the rivalry of France and Spain. Yet if these Powers would not combine they might act separately. Philip, however, would not permit the French to place Mary Queen of Scots on the English throne, for then both England and Scotland would become mere provinces of France. But Philip might take action himself. This is what Elizabeth tried to prevent; and for thirty years she succeeded.

Elizabeth  
and Spain

The  
Netherlands

It was Elizabeth's design to avoid open war with Philip. At the same time she lost no opportunity of injuring him, and there were several ways in which this could be done. For example, she gave secret encouragement to her sailors to set out on piratical expeditions to the Spanish Main,<sup>1</sup> while protesting to the Spanish ambassador that she knew nothing about such matters. Again, she interested herself in the weak spot of Philip's empire—the Netherlands. The inhabitants of these rich Low Countries, one of the chief markets of Europe, disliked the control of the Court of Madrid, and they began a fight for their independence. For more than forty years Philip and his successor strove to quell the rebellious spirit of these Dutchmen, but without success. Philip sent the ruthless Duke of Alva to govern the Netherlands; Alva ruled by means of a council—well named the Council of Blood. But the desire for independence in the Netherlands had become mixed up with the Reformation, and these motives combined were too strong even for Alva. Calvinism took a great hold of the northern provinces (the modern Holland) which formed the backbone of the resistance to Philip. The leadership of William of Orange was one great asset to the rebels; the plucky fighting of the Sea-Beggars

Catholic, lived to see the revolution of which he was the chief author, victorious in half the states of Europe. . . . Both sides may boast of great talents and great virtues. Both have to blush for many follies and crimes. At first, the chances seemed to be decidedly in favour of Protestantism; but the victory remained with the Church of Rome. . . . Nor has Protestantism, in the course of two hundred years, been able to reconquer any portion of what was then lost' (Macaulay: *Essay on Ranke's History of the Popes*, written in 1840).

<sup>1</sup> 'Spanish Main', that is, the *main-land* of America adjacent to the Caribbean Sea.

—as the Dutch sailors were called—was another. The Sea-Beggars used English harbours as bases from which to raid the Spanish shipping which passed through the Straits of Dover. Elizabeth connived at this; she also, from time to time, sent the rebels money, although she hated to part with it.

A similar policy dictated Elizabeth's attitude to the Wars of Religion in France. Here again the Calvinists, called Huguenots, were causing trouble. The reigns of Charles IX and Henry III were one long record of anarchy and bloodshed. Elizabeth occasionally helped the Huguenots, though half-heartedly; here again she played a double game, for she was careful to avoid an open breach with the French king.

One other factor further complicated the situation—the prospect of the queen's marriage. Elizabeth refused Philip's offer of marriage (1559); she dallied, however, with various other suitors, including two brothers of Charles IX of France. But none of these marriage negotiations, though long continued, came to anything. At the beginning of her reign Elizabeth became infatuated with Robert Dudley (son of Northumberland) whom she afterwards made Earl of Leicester. Cecil feared that she would marry Dudley, and perhaps she considered doing so. There was a scandal when Dudley's wife—'my Robsart'—was found dead in suspicious circumstances (1560). Dudley was under a cloud for a time, but he held his position as first man in the kingdom—which he certainly did not deserve—till his death (1588). Elizabeth gave up the idea of marrying him—if she ever really entertained it—and even suggested Leicester as a husband for Mary Queen of Scots. Parliament frequently petitioned the queen to marry, and ensure the succession. She told the members (1563) that 'if any think I never meant to try that life, they be deceived'. But she never married; yet by leaving the question open for years, she kept her courtiers and foreign suitors in a pleasing state of uncertainty, which was what she thoroughly enjoyed. What is more, she was long able to remain on tolerably good terms with the rivals, France and Spain, who were both anxious to win her support. If by marriage she had definitely thrown in her lot with one of them, she would have been at once faced with the open hostility of the other, and this was what she strove to prevent.

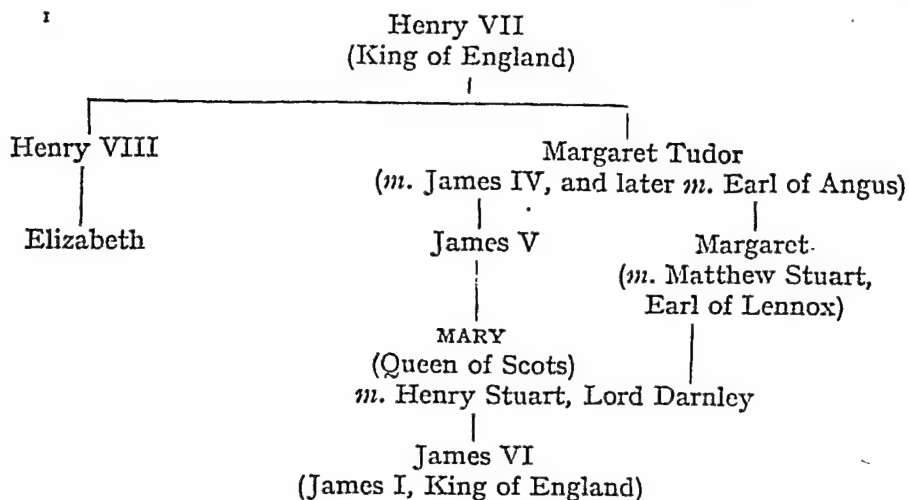
The  
queen's  
marriage  
question

## 2. *The Fall of Mary Queen of Scots*

For the first nine years of Elizabeth's reign Mary Stuart reigned as Queen of Scotland; and then for nineteen years she was Elizabeth's prisoner. The events leading to Mary's fall were of great importance in the course of English history.

When she had been in Scotland four years Mary married (1565). Her choice fell on her cousin, Lord Darnley, who was a grandson of Margaret Tudor by her second husband.<sup>1</sup> The joint claims to the English throne of Mary and Darnley, as descendants of Henry VII, were very strong. For, since Catholic Europe considered Elizabeth illegitimate, Mary was, in Catholic eyes, the rightful queen of England. Now she had married a man who could also claim descent from an English king, and, like Mary, Darnley was a Catholic.

But, unlike her cousin Elizabeth, Mary was a woman who allowed passions, both of love and hatred, to master her; and this brought about her ruin. She soon tired of her weak, worthless husband. For his part, Darnley was jealous of the queen, and at last did her an unpardonable injury. He and his friends broke into Mary's private room at Holyrood, where she was supping with her Italian secretary, David Rizzio. The intruders drew their swords, and Rizzio sheltered behind the queen. But they dragged him from her, and murdered him in the doorway—almost in her sight. She could never forgive



Darnley for this outrage. But, with great cunning, she pretended to be reconciled to him, and even persuaded the foolish man to help her escape from Edinburgh—out of the way of his fellow murderers. Soon after this her son, the future James VI, was born. The next year Darnley fell ill. Mary, still pretending to be friendly, brought him to a house called Kirk-o'-Field, outside Edinburgh. That night Kirk-o'-Field was blown up by gunpowder, and Darnley's body was found in the garden outside (1567). There is little doubt that the murderer was the Earl of Bothwell. But did he act with Mary's knowledge and consent? The view to be taken of that disputed question depends on the genuineness of the 'Casket Letters'—found in a silver gilt casket which one of Bothwell's men delivered up in order to escape torture. 'If the letters are what they seem to be, the letters of the queen to Bothwell, then Mary is implicated in the murder of her husband. If they are not authentic, there is no evidence of her guilt.'<sup>1</sup> The problem remains unsolved to this day.

Murder of  
Darnley  
1567

Two months after the murder Bothwell carried off Mary to Dunbar, divorced his wife, and re-entered Edinburgh with the queen by his side. Mary's love for Bothwell was her ruin. She married him (1567), but even then she was unhappy, knowing that Bothwell, though a fascinating cavalier, was a worthless character. The Scottish lords, led by her half-brother, the Earl of Moray, rose against Bothwell, and defeated the queen and her husband at the battle of Carberry Hill. Bothwell escaped, but Mary was captured and imprisoned in Loch Leven Castle. She was forced to sign her abdication (1567), and her infant son was crowned King of Scotland as James VI. Next year Mary escaped from Loch Leven, and made one more attempt to regain her throne. The Hamiltons and some other friends joined her, but again her friends were defeated (battle of Langside, 1568). This time the queen escaped from the field and fled to England. She wrote to Elizabeth asking for her help. Elizabeth sent an escort, and Mary was brought from Carlisle to Bolton Castle in Yorkshire. There she remained for the time being—out of the reach of rescue.

Fall of  
Mary, 1567

Elizabeth's  
prisoner

<sup>1</sup> Acton, *Lectures on Modern History*, pp. 149-52.

### 3. *The Catholic Plots (1568-87)*

The situation, as far as Elizabeth was concerned, had now considerably improved. Scotland settled down to its usual royal minority, and James VI was brought up a Protestant. If the French tried to set Mary on the English throne, they would no longer find friends in Scotland to assist them. There remained, however, the danger that the English Catholics would prefer Mary to Elizabeth and attempt to make her queen. The first such attempt—the Rising in the North—was made shortly after Mary landed in England.

The  
Northern  
Rising, 1569

The north of England was much more Catholic than the south, and it was from the north that the trouble came. The Earls of Northumberland and Westmorland agreed to raise troops against Elizabeth; the Duke of Norfolk and the Spanish ambassador were also in the plot. Mary sent a message to King Philip that if he would send help she would be queen of England in three months, and the Mass would be said all over the country. Fortunately for Elizabeth, Philip was almost as cautious and hesitating a person as she was herself. The Pope urged him to action, but even the fact that Elizabeth at that moment seized some Spanish treasure-ships on their way to Holland did not move him to an open breach with England. All he would do was to 'encourage with money and secret favour the Catholics of the North'. Philip in fact preferred playing at the half-measures at which Elizabeth herself was such an expert. While he was hesitating the Catholics of the north rebelled (1569). The Earls of Northumberland and Westmorland took Durham; they entered the cathedral and heard Mass, then publicly burnt the English Prayer Book and the English Bible. They marched as far as Tadcaster in Yorkshire, but here they lost heart and began to retreat. Their forces melted away, and the leaders escaped to Scotland. But Elizabeth, like her father after the Pilgrimage of Grace, took a cruel revenge on the north. Gallows were erected on every village green, and between six and seven hundred rebels were hanged. The queen gave particular instructions that an example was to be made in every village; if only one man from a village had joined the rebellion, that man was to be hanged.

The next move came from the Pope, Pius V, who issued a Bull of Excommunication against Elizabeth (1570). In it he declared that English Catholics were released from their allegiance to the heretic queen. The situation was dangerous; the more so as Mary was still intriguing with Spain. Her agent was a Florentine banker named Ridolfi, her chief English supporter the Duke of Norfolk. Ridolfi went to Rome for the papal blessing on the plot. Then he went to Spain, and proposed to the Spanish Council that, as a first step, Elizabeth should be assassinated; as a second, that Alva should invade England from the Netherlands. But while Philip was slowly debating, Cecil had discovered the whole plot.<sup>1</sup> The alarm caused by the northern rebellion, the excommunication of the queen, and the Ridolfi Plot, was reflected in Elizabeth's third Parliament, which passed an Act (1571) making it high treason for an English subject to introduce a Papal Bull into England—in retaliation for the Pope's action in the previous year. Next, the Spanish ambassador was expelled; and the Duke of Norfolk was tried for high treason and condemned to death. Elizabeth hesitated for some time before signing his death warrant, but finally did so, while refusing Parliament's demand for the execution of Mary (1572).

Pius V  
excom-  
municates  
Elizabeth  
1570

Ridolfi Plot  
1571

Execution  
of Norfolk  
1572

Cecil was so alarmed at the intrigues of the English Catholics with the Spaniards that he arranged an alliance with France (Treaty of Blois, April 1572), by which England practically committed herself to join France in assisting the Netherlands against Spain. This alliance was continued even after the shock of the Massacre of St. Bartholomew, four months later (August 1572), when thousands of Huguenots were brutally murdered in the streets of Paris by the orders of Catherine de Medici, the French king's mother.

French  
alliance

Massacre of  
St. Bar-  
tholomew  
1572

A few years later an active Jesuit mission began its work in the British Isles, at first in Ireland. Jesuit missionaries arrived in large numbers from their college at Douai, and began to work up popular feeling among the Irish Catholics against England. The result was the rebellion of the Earl of Desmond (1579), and to assist it the Pope openly sent a body of Italian

The Jesuits  
in Ireland

<sup>1</sup> For the full story of the Ridolfi Plot—a detective thriller in real life—see Froude, *History of England*.

soldiers, and Philip II secretly provided some Spaniards. But the Irish rebellion was crushed and Desmond slain.

The Jesuits  
in England

Meanwhile, the Jesuits were busy in England. Their most active leaders, Parsons (formerly Fellow of Balliol) and Campion, landed in 1580. Parliament, seriously alarmed, passed a severe Act, which made the attempt to convert the queen's subjects to Romanism a treasonable offence, and forbade the hearing of the Mass under a penalty of 100 marks and a year's imprisonment. The fine for Catholic recusants (i.e. those who refused to attend an Anglican church) was raised to £20 a month. Shortly afterwards Campion was seized in Berkshire, tried for conspiring with the queen's enemies, tortured to make him reveal his confederates, and executed with the usual barbarity (1581). Two years later (1583) a Catholic gentleman of Cheshire, named Throckmorton, plotted for a Spanish invasion in favour of Mary, and in this plot Father Parsons was involved.

Execution  
of Campion  
1581

Persecution  
of Catholics

The first Jesuit martyr, Edmund Campion, was a good and sincere man; his execution was a pitiable tragedy. His enthusiasm for his religion had made him a papal agent; yet he was probably not a willing supporter of the papal policy of undermining the loyalty of Elizabeth's subjects. But the Pope could scarcely be surprised if, after he had actually sent troops to a part of the queen's dominions—Ireland—Elizabeth took steps to crush his emissaries in England. The persecution of Catholics went on for the rest of Elizabeth's reign. The torture of Catholic prisoners in the Tower, by the rack and other means, was considered necessary in order to make prisoners reveal the names of their accomplices. The Government justified its cruelty by the danger of the situation, and by the fact that it was now practically impossible to remain at the same time a loyal Catholic and a loyal subject of Elizabeth. The Catholic subjects of the queen thus found themselves in a distressing dilemma. Persecuted for adherence to their faith, impoverished by ruinous fines, they were at any moment liable to be seized, tortured, and put to death for the crime of treason—a crime which most of them had no desire to commit. But when Catholics were executed, it was for treason, not for their religion.

In 1584 an event occurred abroad which increased the alarm



of Cecil and Walsingham. William of Orange, the heroic leader of the revolted Dutch subjects of Philip II, was assassinated by order of the Spanish king. The thought was in every Englishman's mind that it would be Elizabeth's turn next. A National Association was formed by various Protestant gentlemen 'to withstand and revenge to the uttermost all such malicious actions and attempts against Her Majesty's most royal person'. Parliament legalized this Association next year (1585). By another Act all Jesuits were banished from the realm on pain of death, and the harbouring of a Jesuit was made a felony.

Assassina-  
tion of  
William of  
Orange  
1584

The hopes of the captive Queen Mary and of her supporters were still centred on Philip of Spain. Philip was still undecided whether to support Mary more actively. Neither Elizabeth nor Philip ever actually declared war; they drifted into it. War was considerably nearer in 1585. That year Drake conducted a destructive raid on the West Indies;<sup>1</sup> this was his reply to Philip's action in laying an embargo on English ships in Spanish ports. At the same time the plight of the Dutch rebels since the murder of William of Orange convinced Walsingham, and finally the queen herself, that something must be done to help them. A treaty was accordingly signed with the rebels (1585), and in the same year the Earl of Leicester landed in Holland with 6,000 men. The following year, without consulting Elizabeth, Leicester had himself proclaimed Governor-General of the Netherlands; the queen was angry, but allowed him to retain the title. The new governor, however, soon found himself in difficulties; he became involved in the endless quarrels between the various parties among the Dutch and Flemings. He issued a decree prohibiting commerce with the enemy on pain of death. Had this edict been enforced it would have crippled the Spanish armies; but it could not be enforced because it would have crippled the Netherlanders as well. The prosperity of the Netherland seaports depended on overseas trade; they argued, not without reason, that if their trade were ruined there would be no money to continue the war. The surrender of Zutphen by two treacherous Englishmen (Catholics formerly in the Spanish service) added to the unpopularity of Leicester and

Leicester in  
the Nether-  
lands  
1585-7

<sup>1</sup> See below, p. 402.

his men;<sup>1</sup> the last straw was the failure to relieve Sluys (1587). The same year Leicester, broken in health, threw up his command, and returned to England to die. The expedition cost Elizabeth eighteen months' revenue, and Leicester most of his private fortune.

The Bab-  
ington Plot  
1586

In England the plots and counterplots of the last thirty years came to a head in the Babington Conspiracy (1586), in which the most desperate of Mary's adherents in England hatched a plot to murder Elizabeth and to place Mary on the throne with Spanish help. The conspirators were mainly young Catholic gentry, with Anthony Babington at their head, and Father Ballard, a Jesuit on tour in England, as the prime mover. Babington corresponded with Mary, but Walsingham's spies had won over a man called Gifford, one of Mary's servants whom she thought she could trust. Walsingham intercepted the letters, copied them, and then passed them on to their destination. At last there was a letter which showed that Mary was cognizant of the murderous scheme. Then, with all the details of the plot in his hands, Walsingham struck. He placed the evidence before the queen and then arrested Babington and the other conspirators.

Trial of  
Mary, 1586

Thirteen of the plotters were executed. Then Mary was tried before a special court at Fotheringhay Castle. She denied the right of the court to try her, an independent sovereign, and protested her entire innocence. She was tried under an Act of 1585 (the same Act which had legalized the Protestant Association) and found guilty of treason. Parliament—on the ground that 'the queen's safety could in no way be secured as long as the Queen of Scots lived'—then petitioned Elizabeth for Mary's execution. Elizabeth hesitated, and sent a message to Parliament asking whether some other means could be devised for the safety of the kingdom, for she 'could be well pleased to forbear the taking of her blood'. The members replied by repeating their former request. Elizabeth then sent them one of her most characteristic messages: 'If I should say unto you that I mean not to grant your petition, by my faith I should

<sup>1</sup> The chivalrous conduct of Sir Philip Sidney—courtier, scholar, soldier—who was mortally wounded in this campaign, sheds one ray of interest on this rather dull and sordid affair.

say unto you more than perhaps I mean. And if I should say unto you I mean to grant your petition, I should then tell you more than is fit for you to know. And thus I must deliver you an answer answerless.'

For two months longer Elizabeth hesitated; then she signed the warrant for Mary's execution. Even then she gave no direct orders for the execution to be carried out; but her secretary, Davison, carried the warrant to the Privy Council, who acted without further delay. Mary was accordingly—after nearly twenty years' imprisonment in England—beheaded at Fotheringhay (February 1587), protesting that she died a martyr to the Catholic faith. Her story is, indeed, one of the most moving of human tragedies.

Her execution, 1587

Elizabeth's behaviour when she heard of Mary's execution shows her at her worst. Glossing over the awkward fact that she had signed the death-warrant, she declared that she had never intended the sentence to be carried out. The unfortunate Davison was thrown into prison, tried for acting contrary to the queen's orders, and ordered to pay an enormous fine. The fine was remitted, but he was kept in prison for three years. In this way did Elizabeth attempt to avoid the responsibility for Mary's death by sacrificing her secretary.

#### 4. *Traders and Scamen*

##### (i) *Trade with the East.*

The Portuguese discovery of the Cape Route to India, and the foundation of the Spanish Empire in America, had established two great trading monopolies in the world—the Portuguese and the Spanish.<sup>1</sup> This insolent claim, as many Englishmen regarded it, to the monopoly of all the riches of the newly discovered world was bitterly resented by our traders and sailors. The resentment considerably increased with the Reformation, for then to commercial rivalry was added religious intolerance. The Spaniards, who forbade English sailors to trade in their dominions, sometimes treated their enemies badly when they caught them, for to them the English were both heretics and pirates. Tales of Englishmen tortured by the

The Spanish and Portuguese Monopolies

<sup>1</sup> United after 1580, when Philip II conquered Portugal.

agents of the Inquisition did much to inflame national hatred of the Spaniards during Elizabeth's reign, and indeed for long afterwards.

There were two courses open to English traders; they might try to reach the riches of Asia by a route not in foreign hands, or they might boldly attack the enemy on their own ground. The former course commended itself to Cecil, a peace-loving minister who disliked some of the ventures of men like Francis Drake and John Hawkins, who desired to challenge the Spaniards directly. Cecil's views classified maritime activity under three heads—trading, fishing, and piracy—'whereof (he said) the third is detestable and cannot last'. He was mistaken in thinking that piracy could not last—for he underrated Drake's genius—but not in his prophecy that it would lead England into war with Spain. However, the more peaceful kinds of foreign trade, which Cecil encouraged, formed no inconsiderable part of Elizabethan activities. English overseas trade expanded into Europe: the Baltic, German, Mediterranean, and Levant markets were opened up by the Merchant Adventurers, and by the Eastland, Barbary, Venice, and Levant companies.

Turkey Co. 1581 In 1578 some London merchants sought to revive English trade in the Levant, and sent William Harborne to Constantinople to obtain trading privileges with the Sultan of Turkey. The sultan granted permission, and a Turkey Company was set up (1581), which carried on a lucrative trade. Even here the Spaniards tried to stop the passage of English ships through the Straits of Gibraltar. The Turkey Company afterwards joined forces (1592) with another Mediterranean concern, the Venice Company; after the amalgamation the joint business was known as the Levant Company, and it carried on a successful trade for over two centuries.

Levant Co. 1592  
The North-East Passage A revived interest in the passage to the East via the Arctic regions took place in Mary's reign. Sebastian Cabot,<sup>1</sup> who had sailed to the north-west in his youth, suggested that a new effort should be made towards the north-east. The result was the voyage of Sir Hugh Willoughby and Richard Chancellor to the north of Russia (1553). Willoughby and his crew, who got as far east as Nova Zembla, all perished in the rigours of the

Willoughby  
and Chan-  
cellor, 1553

<sup>1</sup> See above, p.307.



PART OF ANTHONY JENKINSON'S (see p. 398) MAP OF 'RUSSIA, MUSCOVY AND TARTARY',  
 PUBLISHED IN 1562.  
 The Black Sea is on the left, mostly covered by the Title; the Caspian Sea to the east of the Title. Boghar (Bokhara)  
 and Shamarghan (Samarkand) are both shown to the east of the Caspian.

Russian winter. Chancellor, more fortunate, reached the port of Archangel, and was conducted to Moscow. It was through this voyage that trade between England and Russia was opened up. A Muscovy Company was established (1553-5) for this purpose and continued to flourish for many years. It sent to Russia an explorer named Anthony Jenkinson who journeyed down the Volga and crossed the Caspian Sea. Then he pushed eastwards and reached the ancient city of Bokhara, once well known to medieval traders, but here he learnt that the disturbed condition of Central Asia would prevent his reaching China or India by the overland route. He therefore returned to Moscow (1559). Three years later he went again to the East, and reached Persia. An Anglo-Persian trade was then opened up and was continued for nearly twenty years, after which it was abandoned (1579) owing to the inroads of the Turks into Persia. Such were the somewhat unexpected results of the English voyages to Russia.

Jenkinson  
Frobisher  
1576  
The search for the North-West Passage was pursued more vigorously. The voyage of Martin Frobisher (1576) caused great excitement in England, for he not only thought he had discovered the mouth of the Passage (in reality Frobisher Sound) but brought back ore which was said to contain gold. A company called the Cathay Company—the name betrays the false hopes of the promoters—was at once formed. But two more voyages (1577-8) served to show that there was no Passage and no gold. Ten years after this, Captain John Davis continued the search for the Passage, and explored the icy waters between Baffin Land and Greenland (1585-7). All these voyages, though disappointing in their immediate result, helped to encourage English seamanship.

The East  
Indies  
But neither the North-East nor the North-West Passage was destined to yield fruitful results to their explorers. The true route to the East—via the Cape of Good Hope—was also attempted in Elizabeth's reign. But here there was a danger that the Spaniards might object; and when (in 1582) Edward Fenton, one of Frobisher's captains, set sail for the East Indies, he was instructed not to plunder the property of the queen's 'friends and allies'. But the Spaniards nevertheless attacked Fenton, and he abandoned the voyage.

A decade later conditions were different; England was at war with Spain, and eager to seize some of the coveted East Indian trade—now, since the absorption of Portugal (1580), in Spanish hands. Two English captains, George Raymond and James Lancaster, sailed for the East in 1591. Raymond's ship sank in a storm with all hands, but Lancaster reached the East Indies, where he took two Portuguese ships, and also visited Ceylon. This expedition involved great hardships, and eventually the surviving sailors mutinied and carried off the ship; Lancaster reached home on board a French privateer in 1594. Nevertheless, the eastern project was not abandoned. A company—the famous East India Company—was formed in 1600, and Lancaster sailed again for the East in the following year. This time he made a great success of his venture, and returned home with a store of pepper and spices from Java. The East India Company had started on its astonishing career.<sup>1</sup>

Lancaster's  
voyages  
1591 and  
1601

The East  
India Co.  
1600

(ii) *Colonization.*

Sir Humphrey Gilbert, a Devonshire gentleman, and half-brother of Sir Walter Raleigh, was one of the first to interest himself in the North-West Passage. But the failure of Fro-bisher's expeditions turned Gilbert's thoughts in a new direction. He was among the first to perceive that North America might be a useful discovery in itself, quite apart from the possible existence of a North-West Passage to India. 'We might inhabit some part of those countries', he wrote, 'and settle there such needy people of our country, which now trouble the commonwealth, and through want here at home are enforced to commit outrageous offences, whereby they are daily consumed with the gallows.'

Sir  
Humphrey  
Gilbert

Gilbert obtained a patent (1578) from the queen to 'inhabit and fortify any barbarous lands' not actually in possession of a Christian prince. The same autumn he left England with a fleet of eleven ships, but the following spring they returned, without having accomplished anything. Three years later he set out again with five ships. This time he landed on the island of Newfoundland, and took formal possession of it in the name of the queen (1583). On the way home Gilbert's ship, the

Gilbert in  
Newfound-  
land, 1583

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter XXII, Sect. 2.

*Squirrel*, was lost with all hands. The account of Gilbert's end was given by a sailor on board the *Golden Hind*, which accompanied the *Squirrel*.

'Gilbert cried out to us, so oft as we did approach within hearing, "We are as near to heaven by sea as by land", reiterating the same speech, well beseeeming a soldier, resolute in Jesus Christ, as I can testify he was. The same Monday night, about twelve of the clock, the frigate being ahead of us, suddenly her lights were out, whereof as it were in a moment we lost the sight, and withal our watch cried *the General was cast away*, which was too true. For in that moment the frigate was devoured and swallowed up by the sea' (Hakluyt).

Sir Walter  
Raleigh

Two years after this disaster Sir Walter Raleigh, who had risen to favour at Court, obtained the queen's permission to send out another expedition to America. The queen refused to let Raleigh take command in person, and so the expedition sailed under Sir Richard Grenville, who took with him a hundred pioneers. The settlement was made on Roanoke Island, off the coast of what is now North Carolina. The colony was named Virginia, in honour of the queen. But it was not a success. Sir Francis Drake, returning from a plundering raid on the Spanish Main, called at the infant colony (1586) and brought back all the colonists with him, at their own request. Next year Raleigh tried again and sent out another 150 colonists. Their fate is a mystery. When an English ship next visited the island the colony was found to be abandoned. There was no sign of the colonists; they had simply disappeared, nor were they ever heard of again. They had probably all been massacred by the Indians. So ended the first attempt to plant an English colony overseas.

Virginia  
founded  
1585

### (iii) *Piracy and War.*

John  
Hawkins

Like the first English voyages to Russia, those to West Africa began in Mary's reign. Thomas Wyndham and John Lok made several expeditions to the Guinea Coast, in spite of the protests of the Portuguese government. Early in Elizabeth's reign the Portuguese monopoly was again infringed, this time by a greater man—John Hawkins. His methods were effective, though crude. He just landed on the Guinea Coast



and seized 300 negroes. He had been told that the negroes would be 'very good merchandise' in the West Indies, and so indeed he found. The Spanish colonists in America were very ready to buy Hawkins' human cargo, but the Spanish government, which forbade trade between its colonists and foreign nations, was seriously annoyed.

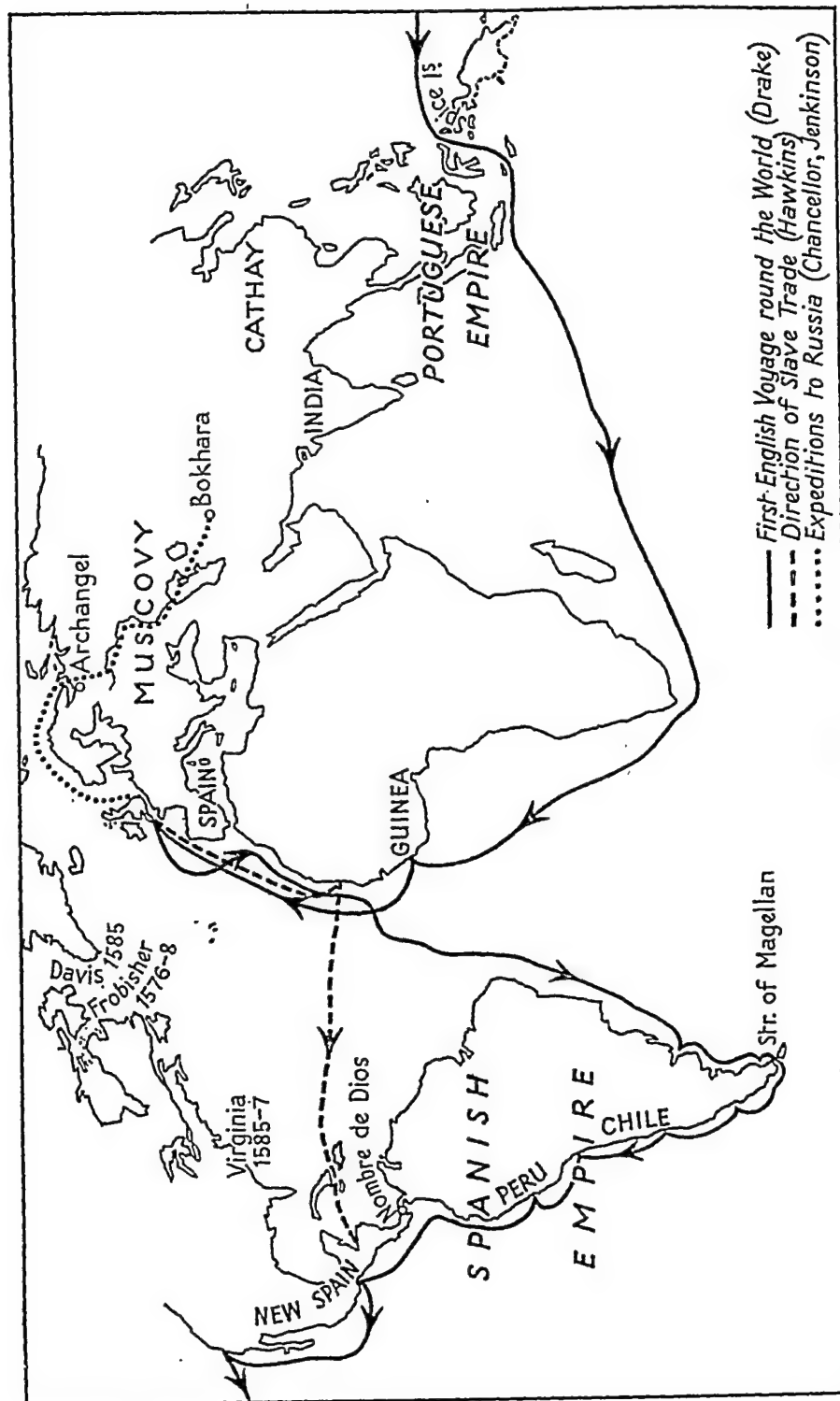
The Slave  
Trade

Hawkins made two successful slave voyages (1562 and 1564), in the second of which the queen's ship, the *Jesus of Lubeck*, took part. Then, on his third voyage (1567) he met with disaster. He obtained his 'merchandise' in Africa, sold it in the West Indies, and prepared to return home. With him was his young cousin, Francis Drake. A storm drove Hawkins' six ships on to the Mexican coast, and he sought shelter in the Spanish port of San Juan d'Ulloa. Scarcely had he done so when a Spanish fleet of thirteen vessels appeared outside the harbour. Hawkins seriously considered denying them entry, but, probably fearing the queen's displeasure if he committed so hostile an act, he decided to let them come in. They gave a definite promise not to molest him; but six days later, reinforced by soldiers from the mainland, they suddenly attacked him. He lost the *Jesus* and three smaller vessels, but he got away on the *Minion*, crowded with 200 survivors. Drake also escaped with the remaining ship, the *Judith*. Hawkins decided to put 100 men ashore on the Mexican coast, since his ship could not carry so large a crew. These unfortunate sailors afterwards fell into the hands of the Spanish Inquisition. Some were burnt at the stake, some publicly flogged, some condemned to a lifetime of slavery in the galleys.

San Juan  
d'Ulloa  
1567

The incident of San Juan d'Ulloa made a great impression on Francis Drake. He detested the Spanish methods—their cruelty to captured Englishmen, no less than their refusal to trade on equal terms. Henceforth he made it his business, not to try to trade with the Spaniards, but to make war on them. In those days it was possible for a private subject to commit warlike acts against the subjects of another nation without necessarily involving his country in war. Drake's trade, in fact, was that of the privateer. It was no new thing; on the contrary, there had been privateers in European waters for many centuries. But no one, before or since,

Francis  
Drake



THE ELIZABETHAN SEAMEN

ever brought privateering to the same pitch of success as Francis Drake.

In 1572 Drake sailed from Plymouth with two ships and made for the Gulf of Panama. He landed at Nombre de Dios and made friends with the natives. With their help he crossed the hills to a point where he would meet the Spanish mule-train, laden with the silver of Peru, crossing the Isthmus of Panama from the Pacific to the Atlantic coast. The Englishmen fell on the oncoming mule-train, captured it, and brought off as much silver as they could carry away. Then they loaded their ships and made for home. It was during this expedition that Drake climbed the tree from which he could see the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans at the same time.

Five years later Drake sailed from Plymouth on his most famous voyage (1577). The queen had taken shares in the expedition, though, of course, she pretended to know nothing about it. He sailed for South America, and successfully navigated the dangerous Magellan Straits, though he lost four out of his five ships in doing so. With the remaining ship, the *Golden Hind*, he sailed up the Chilean coast, and proceeded to raid the principal Spanish ports. Lima and Valparaiso were plundered before the startled inhabitants realized that an English ship was in the Pacific. The *Golden Hind* was now laden with a cargo of gold and precious stones. Leaving the Spaniards behind, Drake sailed north (see map). He spent the winter in a land which he called New Albion, but which is now called California. From there, in the spring, the intrepid sailor set out across the unknown waters of the Pacific, until he reached the East Indies. He accomplished the difficult voyage through the islands, sailed across the Indian Ocean, and rounded the Cape. On 26 September 1580 he sailed into Plymouth Sound, having been absent rather less than three years. Drake was the first Englishman to sail round the world, a remarkable achievement when one remembers the lack of charts in those days.

Drake's  
voyage  
round the  
world  
1577-80

The Spanish ambassador was extremely angry. Elizabeth invited him to accompany her to Deptford where Drake's ship was lying. She then gave a display of that cool courage—not to say insolence—which lay behind all her hesitation. She went

on board the *Golden Hind* and knighted the arch-pirate in the presence of the Spanish ambassador. Drake was allowed to keep £10,000 worth of his booty; the promoters of the voyage took the rest, the queen's share being close on half a million.

<sup>Drake's  
raid, 1585</sup> Even after this the inevitable conflict with Spain was delayed another five years. Then, in 1585, Philip laid an embargo on all English ships in Spanish ports. Elizabeth decided to retaliate, and sent for Drake, who was commissioned to undertake a raid on the Spanish colonies. He sailed from Plymouth with Frobisher as second in command, and made first for the Cape Verde Islands, where two towns were destroyed. He then crossed the Atlantic, burnt Santo Domingo, then seized Cartagena on the Spanish Main, and held it to ransom. Passing north to Florida, he burnt the town of St. Augustine, where not a single house was left standing. Then he returned home with a rich booty.

### 5. *The Defeat of the Armada*

<sup>Drifting  
into war</sup> Elizabeth had been reigning in England for thirty years before Philip sent his great Armada to attack her. The chief reason for this delay was that the king was not anxious to rush into a conflict, of which the result might be doubtful, and which would in any case involve considerable expense. There were, however, several reasons why Philip at last decided to resort to strong measures. The English sailors had, for over twenty years, been conducting piratical raids on Spanish ships and Spanish ports. The climax to all this was Drake's destructive raid on the West Indies (1585). Again, Elizabeth's interference in the Netherlands had become intolerable; since the Leicester expedition (1586-7) her attitude was no longer compatible with the existence of friendly relations. Lastly, the Pope was urging Philip to embark on a war which he regarded as a crusade to destroy a heretic government.

The execution of Mary Queen of Scots (February 1587) removed whatever doubts remained in Philip's mind. He had always questioned the wisdom of placing Mary on the English throne, for Mary was French, not Spanish, by upbringing and sympathy. Besides this, her son, James VI of Scotland, who was presumably the heir to both kingdoms, was a Protestant.

But Mary had, not long before her death, disinherited James, and passed on her claims to the English throne to Philip himself. After that, Philip hesitated no longer. He gave orders for a great Armada to be prepared in all the ports of Spain.

It was while these preparations were being made that Drake brought off another great raid. Commissioned by the queen to reconnoitre the Spanish ports, he made straight for Cadiz, the head-quarters of the Spanish fleet. With characteristic boldness he left twenty of his twenty-four ships outside, and entered the harbour with only four vessels. But Drake's apparent rashness was grounded on confidence. He knew that the heavily armed ships which Henry VIII had laid down, and which had been improved since, gave the English an immense advantage over the Spanish galleys. These galleys depended on their power to ram and sink their opponent with their steel-shod beaks; they were no match against Drake's broadsides. As the galleys dashed towards him he opened fire. A dreadful execution was done; the naked galley-slaves were mown down in hundreds, and it was impossible for the survivors to row towards the English ships. The victors of Lepanto<sup>1</sup> were beaten by a weapon against which they were powerless; the slaughter at Cadiz (1587) closed the era of galley warfare for ever.

The raid on  
Cadiz, 1587

The result of this raid justified the boast of Fenner (Drake's friend) that twelve of Her Majesty's ships were a match for all the galleys in the king's service. But all his countrymen did not share Fenner's confidence. To many, perhaps to most, the danger seemed appalling. England was without allies, a small country, with no regular army, standing alone against the might of the greatest empire in the world, an empire on which, it was boasted, 'the sun never set'. Philip was the master of the New World, and of a considerable portion of the Old. By annexing Portugal (1580) he had absorbed the dominions of his only serious rival in America and the Indies. The famous Spanish infantry were thought to be unbeatable. And it was these very soldiers, commanded by one of the greatest generals in history—the Duke of Parma—who were waiting to invade England. No wonder Philip pushed forward his preparations to crush the insolent islanders.

<sup>1</sup> A great Spanish victory over the Turks in the Mediterranean (1571).

The plan of  
invasion

Philip's plan was to conquer England from the Netherlands, where Parma's army, 30,000 strong, was mustered. Parma built flat-bottomed boats at Antwerp in sufficient numbers to convey his army to England. When the Dutch blockaded the mouth of the Scheldt he caused a canal to be dug, so that the boats could be moved to Dunkirk. But, as Parma well knew, to cross to England was impossible without a protecting fleet. It was for this purpose that the Armada was provided. It was thought that a large Spanish fleet could easily dispose of a smaller number of English vessels, and that then the way would be clear for Parma to invade England.

The  
Spanish  
Armada

But this plan of invasion was never carried into effect, for the Spanish fleet, though slightly superior in numbers, was hopelessly inferior in every other respect. There were just over 130 ships in the Armada, but a large proportion were merchant vessels, commandeered for war. Their guns were light and badly placed; the Spaniards despised the gun as the weapon of cowards who dared not fight at close quarters. Thus armed, the famous Spanish galleons were not much more fit to encounter the English ships than were the oared galleys which Drake had destroyed in Cadiz harbour. This fact was overlooked by the Spaniards. They expected to come to grips with their enemy, board his ships, and overpower the English in a hand-to-hand conflict. For this reason their ships were manned chiefly by soldiers; the Armada carried 18,000 soldiers and only 8,000 sailors—whom the soldiers despised almost as much as they despised guns. The commander of the Armada was the Duke of Medina Sidonia, a man of slight military experience, and with no knowledge of maritime warfare. But the duke was one of the first grandees of Spain; and high rank was essential in the commander of a Spanish force, otherwise the lesser officers, nobles themselves, would not obey orders.

The  
English  
Fleet

The English fleet differed in several important respects from the Armada. In the first place, the thirty-four vessels belonging to the queen were real ships of war. They were all heavily armed with guns, and in this respect each of the queen's ships was vastly superior to any Spanish ship afloat. They had all been carefully put in order by John Hawkins. The only defects of the English fleet—and they were serious enough—were a

shortage of powder and a shortage of food; the shortage of powder was partly due to the unexpectedly large quantity used during the action, and the shortage of food was the fault of the system of victualling. In addition to the ships of the Royal Navy some fifty or more privately owned vessels joined in the fight; these ships also were much better armed than the corresponding vessels in the Armada.

But besides their superiority in gun-power the English had another advantage: their ships were manned, not by soldiers, but by fighting sailors, trained in the school of Hawkins and Drake. The supreme command, it is true, was given to Lord Howard of Effingham, and he, like Medina Sidonia, was chosen for his rank. But the other officers were men like Drake, Hawkins, Frobisher, and others whose names the Spaniards had already learnt to dread.

The sailing of the Armada from Spain has been thus described:—

‘The scene as the fleet passed out of the harbour must have been singularly beautiful. . . . The early sun was lighting the long train of the Galician mountains, marking with shadows the cleft defiles and shining softly on the white walls and vineyards of Coruna. The wind was light and falling towards a calm; the great galleons drifted slowly with the tide on the purple water, the long streamers trailing from the trucks, the red crosses, the emblem of the crusade, showing bright upon the hanging sails. . . . Out of thirty thousand men who that morning stood upon the decks of the proud Armada, twenty thousand and more were never again to see the hills of Spain. Of the remnant who in two short months crept back ragged and torn, all but a few hundred returned only to die. The Spaniards though a great people were usually over-conscious of their greatness; but among the soldiers and sailors of the doomed expedition against England, the national vainglory was singularly silent. They were the flower of the country, culled and chosen over the entire peninsula, and they were going with a modest nobility upon a service which they knew to be dangerous, but which they believed to be peculiarly sacred.’<sup>1</sup>

The Armada entered the English Channel on Saturday, 20 July 1588. The Spaniards saw no signs of their enemy. But the next morning, when they were off Plymouth, sixty English

The  
Armada  
sails

In the  
Channel

<sup>1</sup> Froude, *History of England*, chap. xii.

ships attacked them in a manner which they little expected. Instead of closing with the enemy, in the traditional style, the English passed by the Spanish fleet, each ship firing, as it passed, a terrific broadside. The Spaniards could not reply, for, with their inadequate guns, they were out of range. Nor could they close with the enemy, for the English sailed away.

Off Calais All that week the entire Armada moved slowly up-Channel; there were two minor fights off the Dorset coast and the Isle of Wight. On Saturday, 27 July, a week after they had entered the Channel, the Spaniards dropped anchor in Calais Roads. Here Medina Sidonia sent a message to Parma, and perhaps intended waiting for him. But he was not allowed to do so. Drake, taking advantage of a favourable wind, sent fire-ships among the Spanish fleet. Only a few ships were actually set on fire, but the rest cut their cables and made for the open sea. The Spaniards were driven from Calais.

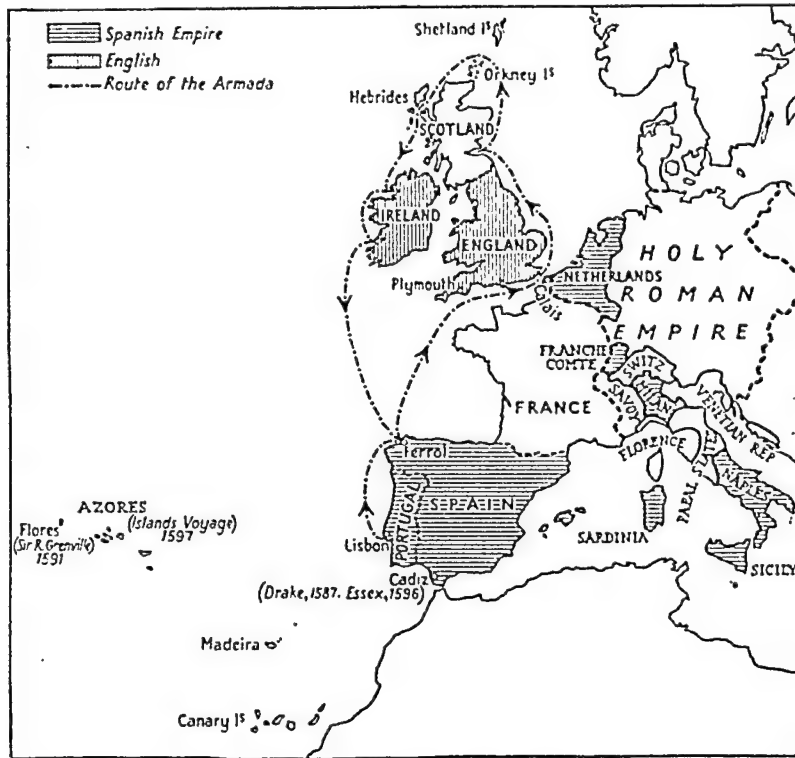
Battle of Gravelines 29 July On Monday, 29 July, was fought the battle of Gravelines. The wind again favoured the English, for it blew strongly towards the Flemish coast, from which the Spaniards struggled to get away. As they did so, broadside after broadside from the English guns battered their ships and cut down their soldiers. It was a terrible slaughter; and the Spaniards, as at Plymouth, could make no effective reply from their own feeble guns. Only a lucky change in the direction of the wind saved the Spaniards from being driven upon the sandbanks of Flanders. Though they lost only two or three ships at Gravelines, the whole fleet was badly damaged—how badly was shown in the sequel. For Medina Sidonia, recognizing defeat, determined to sail round Great Britain and make for Ireland—a friendly Catholic country, as he thought. But his ships, battered by the English guns at Gravelines, were in no condition to make so long a voyage. All leaked badly, a great storm arose, and there were no friendly harbours in England or Scotland. Soon the majority of the ships became wrecks. Many of them were driven on to the inhospitable shores of Scotland and Ireland; in Ireland hundreds of Spanish soldiers were murdered by the natives, who turned out to be little better than savages. Of the 130 ships which had made up the Armada, only fifty reached home.

The end of the Armada



### 6. *The Last Years of Elizabeth*

The English naval war with Spain (1588-1604) did not end till after Elizabeth's death.<sup>1</sup> To pursue it vigorously was contrary to all the queen's instincts; besides, she rightly remembered



THE NAVAL WAR, 1585-1604

that war is very costly. But, in the first flush of the victory over the Armada, the war party, led by Walsingham and Drake, was in the ascendant. Early in 1589, therefore, the offensive was taken against Spain. It was arranged that an English army should land in Portugal to assist Dom Antonio (the Portuguese pretender) to gain the throne and expel the Spaniards from his country. An English Armada, larger than the Spanish Armada, was assembled under Drake; on board

<sup>1</sup> Peace with Spain was made by James I in 1604.

Expedition to Portugal 1589 was an army of about 15,000 men. The expedition sailed, landed at Corunna and sacked the town, then went on towards Lisbon. But Drake failed to force the passage of the Tagus, and the army, owing to its lack of siege-guns, was repulsed from Lisbon with some slight loss. There was no sign of the expected Portuguese rising on behalf of Dom Antonio. And so, terribly reduced by sickness, the English Armada returned home.

Elizabeth was extremely angry: England had lost 10,000 men and she had lost all the money she had invested in the expedition. Drake was in disgrace for the next five years, during which time little was attempted at sea beyond raids against Spanish treasure-ships. In 1591 Admiral Lord Thomas Howard<sup>1</sup> was sent to the Azores, with Sir Richard Grenville as second in command. Arrived there, the Admiral learnt that the Spaniards had mustered a large battle fleet to escort their treasure-ships home. He wisely decided to retreat, as he was completely outnumbered. Sir Richard Grenville, however, in the *Revenge*, remained—to wage his immortal fight with one ship against the whole Spanish fleet. So formidable were the English guns that the *Revenge* put up a fight lasting a day and a night before she surrendered. Then a storm arose which sank the *Revenge* together with over a hundred of the enemy—warships and treasure-ships.

Essex Meanwhile the battle of politics was being fought at home. There is scarcely any period in English history which can boast of a more brilliant group of men than those who moved in the Court of Elizabeth during her last decade. The elderly queen, still expecting—and receiving—the flattery and attention to which she had been accustomed for nearly forty years, was the goddess of that Court. The brilliant Sir Walter Raleigh was being superseded by Essex, a new favourite. Robert Devereux, Earl of Essex, was a member of the old nobility of England. Young, handsome, and proud, bold to the point of recklessness, Essex exerted a strange fascination over the ageing queen. He was about twenty-one when he succeeded his step-father Leicester (who died in 1588) as the first of the queen's courtiers: she was fifty-five. Though Elizabeth was flattered by the attentions of so young a cavalier, she was far too old a diplo-

<sup>1</sup> Son of the Duke of Norfolk executed in 1572.

matist to allow him, as he desired, to influence her policy. Her chief minister was the man who had stood by her side for forty years, Lord Burleigh, now seventy years of age. He was getting feeble and gouty; but his son, the clever hunchback, Sir Robert Cecil, was ready to take his place. Against the Cecils stood Essex, the dazzling earl who sought the overthrow of the 'old fox', as he called Burleigh.

The years 1595-6-7 saw a vigorous revival of the prosecution of the Spanish war. Elizabeth, alarmed at the news that Philip was preparing another Armada, sent once more for her old sailors. Hawkins and Drake undertook a raid on the Spanish possessions in the West Indies (1595), but it was a failure. As he once more sailed his ship on *Nombre de Dios* Bay, Drake found that the Spaniards were considerably stronger than in the great days of his youth. Hawkins died at sea, and soon afterwards Drake himself died of a sickness which had already carried off large numbers of his men. He was buried at sea, in the waters that washed the Spanish Main, where his name had been a word of terror for a generation.

Death of  
Hawkins  
and Drake  
1595-6.

The next year another fleet sailed from England under Lord Howard of Effingham, Lord Thomas Howard, and Sir Walter Raleigh. Essex commanded the army of 8,000 men which it carried. This fleet destroyed the shipping in Cadiz harbour; Essex and his men landed and took the town, which they gave to the flames. Philip swore vengeance, and, against the advice of his captains, dispatched another Armada to England in the late autumn (1596). It was, however, destroyed by a storm and never even sighted the English coast. The next year Essex and Raleigh went off on the 'Islands Voyage'—to the Azores. They missed the Spanish treasure-fleet by a few hours, quarrelled bitterly, and returned home empty-handed to face a wrathful queen. By way of reply Philip, who was now a dying man, ordered a third Armada to sail, but it suffered the same fate as its predecessor.

The Islands  
Voyage  
1597

The Islands Voyage was the last effort of the war as far as Elizabeth was concerned, though English privateers continued to attack Spanish merchant ships. The damage they did was considerable, and the main Spanish fleet from America could only cross the Atlantic with a large convoy of warships.

Death of Philip II 1598 Philip II died in 1598, passing on to his successor the unsolved problem of the conquest of England. That same year Elizabeth lost her old servant Burleigh, whom she comforted in his last illness.

Essex in Ireland 1599 The hopes of the Spaniards were now centred on Ireland, where the population was in a constant state of rebellion against the English government. In an evil hour Essex persuaded the queen to let him lead an expedition for the conquest of Ireland (1599). But once arrived there, he did nothing except make a truce with the Earl of Tyrone, the chief rebel, which he was not authorized to do. Then he suddenly came home, leaving his army behind. For thus disobeying his instructions and deserting his post he was utterly disgraced. He was sentenced to lose all his offices and to be imprisoned in his own house. But the fiery earl was not the man to sit down under such treatment. He was still popular, and, imagining that he could overthrow the Government, he attempted to enlist the support of the London mob on his side; his rebellion, however, was a complete fiasco. For such behaviour there could be only one punishment, and Elizabeth signed his death warrant. Essex was only thirty-four at the time of his execution (February 1601).

His rebellion and death, 1601

The glamour went out of the Court when Essex died. The wily Sir Robert Cecil was now the chief figure; and he was quietly preparing for the future—that future in which Elizabeth could have no part. No one dared mention the subject of her successor to the old queen; but the careful Sir Robert was in secret communication with King James of Scotland, and all was ready for his peaceful accession to the English throne.

Elizabeth's last Parliament

In 1601 Elizabeth attended her last Parliament. The chief grievance of the Commons was the question of monopolies,<sup>1</sup> which meant the sole right to sell various articles; such rights were often granted to favoured subjects, like the late Earl of Essex. Such profiteering at the public expense was an obvious evil; Elizabeth saw that it would be graceful to give way. She

<sup>1</sup> *Monopolies* had begun partly as a means of encouraging new trades and industries, but they now came to be granted in oppressive numbers as a means of raising revenue.

sent a message to Parliament saying she would remedy the matter; the Commons replied, in the usual language of the day, that words could not express their gratitude, but 'in all duty and thankfulness, prostrate at your feet, we present our most loyal and thankful hearts . . . and the last spirit of breath in our nostrils, to be poured out, to be breathed up, for your safety'.

The queen took the opportunity of making a noble speech; the members knelt as she addressed them.

'There is no jewel, be it of never so rich a price, which I prefer before this jewel, I mean your love. For I do more esteem it than any treasure or riches; for that we know how to prize, but love and thanks I count inestimable. And though God hath raised me high, yet this I count the glory of my Crown, that I have reigned with your loves. . . . There will never queen sit in my seat with more zeal to my country, or more care to my subjects, and that will sooner with willingness yield and venture her life for your good and safety than myself. And though you have had, and may have, many Princes more mighty and wise sitting in this seat, yet you never had, or shall have, any that will be more careful and loving.'

### 7. *The Puritans*

The severity of the laws against Popish recusants was not relaxed during Elizabeth's reign. On the contrary, a further disability was inflicted on them by an Act of 1593. This Act began by a reference to 'sundry wicked and seditious persons, terming themselves Catholics, and being indeed spies and intelligencers for her Majesty's foreign enemies'. It went on to say that all Popish recusants would in future be forbidden to travel more than five miles from their homes. The intention was obviously to hinder the work of possible plotters. But the suspicion was the more ungenerous, for the main body of English Catholics had shown themselves loyal subjects since the attempted Spanish invasion of 1588.

But during the latter part of Elizabeth's reign the main question with which the Anglican bishops were concerned was the spread of Puritan-doctrines. The Puritans were dissatisfied with the Anglican settlement of 1559, and they desired to set up a form of Church government similar to that recently

established in Scotland.<sup>1</sup> The name Puritan was applied to those who desired a purer (i.e. simpler) form of worship—they considered the Anglican service was still too much like the Roman—and who set great store by strictness of conduct.

Many of the clergy favoured the Puritan ideas, and the movement gained ground in many parts of the country. Thomas Cartwright, who had been Professor of Divinity at Cambridge, was one of the Puritan leaders. Another leader was Robert Browne (c. 1550–1633), who graduated at Cambridge and founded a church at Norwich on what were later known as Congregational principles. The Church, in his view, should be governed not by the State, nor by bishops, nor by presbyters, but by the ‘congregation’ that composed it. The Brownists became known later as Independents, of whom Oliver Cromwell (born 1599) was a supporter. It was through the Brownists and other Puritan ‘sects’<sup>2</sup> that the English added to what was done by Luther and Calvin and advanced beyond sixteenth-century ideas. For the English sects fought for liberty of conscience as the birthright of mankind.

Unauthorized religious meetings, known as ‘conventicles’, were held by the Brownist enthusiasts; other fervent Puritans conducted their own services, called ‘prophesyings’, which were largely attended. But the rise of these new sects was extremely distasteful to the queen. She disliked their doctrines on two grounds: they savoured of religious enthusiasm, which was disagreeable to her cold temperament, and their ideas of Church government might clearly lead to a denial of her cherished Royal Supremacy. She therefore condemned the new teaching either as ‘new-fangledness’ or as ‘presumption’. She commanded Grindal, the Archbishop of Canterbury, to take action against the Puritans. Grindal, who strongly sympathized with them, refused to do so; the queen thereupon suspended him from his office (1577).

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 378.

<sup>2</sup> Note that the *Puritans* aimed at purifying the Church from survivals of Catholic ceremonial, the *Presbyterians* at remodelling Church government (i.e. rule by presbyters or elders, not by bishops and priests). Both Puritans and Presbyterians wished to reform the Church from within. But the *Independents* (Brownists), the forerunners of the Non-conformists, made a movement towards leaving the Church altogether.

Then followed a struggle between the Puritans and the bishops, the latter being backed by the queen. Puritanism was derived from the teaching of Calvin, who had advocated Church government by presbyters instead of bishops. It was natural, therefore, that the Puritans should attack the bishops. And, after the appointment of John Whitgift as Archbishop of Canterbury (1583-1604), it was inevitable that the bishops should attack the Puritans. For Whitgift, though he held some of the Calvinist doctrines himself, was a bitter opponent of the Puritan notions of Church government; he believed in the rule of the Church by bishops and he intended to defend it by all the means in his power. From the day of his appointment (1583) the controversy entered upon a more acute stage, which was to last for a century.

Archbishop  
Whitgift  
1583-1604

Whitgift attempted to check the spread of the obnoxious doctrines by establishing a strict censorship of the Press, under the control of the Bishop of London and himself. But the Puritan leaders were too clever for him. In 1588 they set up secret printing presses in out-of-the-way parts of the country, and distributed pamphlets, all bearing the signature 'Martin Mar-prelate'. The pamphlets contained an attack, not only on the office of bishop, but on the personal character of the individual bishops of the Anglican Church. The most scurrilous terms of abuse were employed. Whitgift and his colleagues were stung by this insidious attack, but they found it difficult to stamp it out, since they could not trace its source.

'Martin  
Mar-  
prelate'

In 1593 a Statute directed against Puritans was passed through Parliament. This Act devised severe penalties on the frequenters of conventicles; imprisonment, banishment from the realm, and even the death penalty were included as possible punishments. The result was an increase in persecution, and Whitgift hunted down his victims through the Court of High Commission<sup>1</sup> which, from this time on, was regarded with peculiar hatred by the Puritan sects. Some Puritans were actually put to death; many more fled to Holland, there to form congregations of Englishmen who, in the next generation, became the nucleus of the New England beyond the seas.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 371.

<sup>2</sup> See below, p. 511.

In that age moderation in either politics or religion was rare. Only a very exceptional mind, such as that of Francis Bacon, a nephew of Lord Burleigh, could see the follies of both sides. In his *Advertisement touching the Controversies of the Church of England* (1589) Bacon pointed to the extravagance of the Puritans, their absurd distrust of almost all former doctrines and practices, and their indecent and libellous style of writing. On the other hand he censured the Anglican bishops for their persecuting spirit. He told them that if they insisted too strongly on uniformity among English Protestants they would make themselves ridiculous in the eyes of the world, by exhibiting a Church divided against itself. For Bacon saw, what Whitgift could not see, that persecution stimulates the thing which it is designed to suppress. Neither Whitgift nor Queen Elizabeth realized how deeply the Puritan doctrines had taken root. Nor could they foresee that the controversy, bitter as it was in their time, would help to produce the civil war of the following century.

In the beginning of the year 1603, when she was seventy years old, Elizabeth's vigour began to fail. In March she died after a short illness. Cecil had already arranged for the accession of the King of Scotland, which took place without any disturbance. And so the great reign was over; the woman who, forty-five years before, had come to rule over a distracted country, passed on to her successor a kingdom which was ready to take its place among the first nations of the world. That this was so was due, in large measure, to the 'loving care' of the great queen for the welfare of her people.



## DATE SUMMARY: ELIZABETH

(1558-1603)

## ENGLAND, SCOTLAND, AND IRELAND

## EUROPE, ASIA, AND AMERICA

## THE YEARS OF PEACE

1559 Acts of Uniformity and Supremacy  
 1560 Treaty of Edinburgh

1559 Jenkinson in Moscow

1563 Stat. Artificers

1562 Hawkins—Slave Trade

1564 Birth of SHAKESPEARE

1565 Mary Queen of Scots *m.* Darnley

1567 Fall of Mary

1567 San Juan d'Ulloa

1570 Elizabeth excommunicated

1571 Ridolfi Plot

1572 Norfolk executed

1572 Massacre of St. Bartholomew

1576-8 Frobisher's Voyages

1577-80 DRAKE round the World

1579-83 Munster Rebellion

1581 Campion executed

1583 Whitgift Archbishop

1583 Gilbert (Newfoundland)

1584 William of Orange murdered

## THE SPANISH WAR

1587 Mary Queen of Scots executed

1588 SPANISH ARMADA

1585 Drake's Raid—America

1587 Drake's Raid—Cadiz

1593 Act against Puritans

Marlowe *d.*

1595-1603 Tyrone's Rebellion

1591-4 Lancaster's Voyage

1591 *The Revenge*

1596 Drake *d.*

1597 'Islands Voyage'

1598 Philip II of Spain *d.*

1600 EAST INDIA COMPANY

1601 POOR LAW CODE

## XVIII

### THE AGE OF SHAKESPEARE

#### 1. *The Poets and the Drama*

English Music ELIZABETHAN England, 'a nest of singing birds', was famous for its love of music. The lute, the viol (forerunner of the violin), and the virginals (forerunner of the piano) were the favourite instruments. English composers were known throughout Europe; Tallis (*d.* 1585) and his pupil Byrd (*d.* 1623) and Orlando Gibbons (*d.* 1625) all excelled in the field of sacred music. Of these Byrd enjoyed a reputation in the musical world comparable with that of Shakespeare in the world of letters.

The opening lines of *Twelfth Night*—'If music be the food of love, play on'—are spoken by a love-sick lord surrounded by his musicians, and remind us that the ordinary attendants of every man of wealth included minstrels and singers. 'Let music sound while he doth make his choice', says Portia in the casket scene in the *Merchant of Venice*, the play in which Shakespeare has given his noble estimate of the power of music:

The man that hath no music in himself,  
Nor is not mov'd with concord of sweet sounds,  
Is fit for treasons, stratagems and spoils.

Singing and dancing, too, were much in fashion in Tudor times; and in the modern revival of Folk and Morris dances and Songs we can hear again the jolly tunes of Shakespeare's England.

Moreover the Elizabethan Age, so rich in music, also produced some of the greatest lyric poets (i.e. song writers) in any literature. Shakespeare himself wrote some of the best English songs: 'O Mistress Mine', 'Where the bee sucks there suck I,' 'Who is Sylvia?', 'Sigh no more, ladies', 'Under the greenwood tree', 'Blow, blow, thou winter wind'. His contemporary, Ben Jonson (1573-1637) wrote many lyrics including the famous 'Drink to me only with thine eyes'; while in Thomas Ford's *Music of Sundry Kinds* (1607) appeared the



#### SHAKESPEARE'S ENGLAND

Part of a contemporary picture of a marriage-feast. In the foreground a country dance is in progress, to the music of fiddles. The feast is being prepared in an open barn. The parish church can be seen behind the trees.

equally well-known 'There is a lady sweet and kind', by an anonymous writer. Robert Herrick, a Devonshire clergyman who lived under the Stuart kings, but who carried on the Elizabethan lyric tradition, wrote: 'Cherry Ripe', 'Corinna's gone a-Maying', 'Gather ye rosebuds while ye may', and the exquisite

Fair Daffodils, we weep to see  
You haste away so soon . . .

Edmund  
Spenser

The Elizabethan Age of English poetry filled the last two decades of the queen's reign and overlapped into that of her successor. The earliest Elizabethan poets, Sir Philip Sidney and Edmund Spenser, both produced poetry which was of great merit. Spenser loved to wander in the realms of medieval fancy. If he spoke of war, he thought of knights in shining armour; if of peace, of shepherds and shepherdesses living in idyllic happiness. Spenser's longest poem, *The Faerie Queene*, is an elaborate allegory; his Red Cross Knight is Holiness, his Sir Guyon, Temperance, and so on. Some of the characters represent historical personages. The 'fain Duessa' is perhaps Mary Queen of Scots and the Wizard Archimago Philip of Spain; Gloriana, the Queen of the Faerie Court ('That greatest Glorious Queene of Faery lond'), is, of course, Queen Elizabeth, for whom no flattery could be too gross in the eyes of the court poets.

Far different from this elaborate and at times artificial verse of the Court was the bold, new dramatic art, which was at the same time coming into popular favour. English drama had grown up out of the old Miracle and Morality Plays which were performed during the Middle Ages in all the chief English towns, usually by the guildsmen. English acting for long retained the simple and direct character of these early performances, designed to appeal to the rough humour and passions of the common folk; but the plays themselves gradually lost their religious basis. In Elizabeth's day university men began to write plays of a non-religious character, which soon became popular, especially in London. These men—Peele, Greene, Nash, and Marlowe—were the forerunners of Shakespeare.

Marlowe

Christopher Marlowe (1564-93) was born in the same year as Shakespeare and was killed in a tavern brawl before he was

thirty. His best plays had a considerable influence on the work of Shakespeare. Marlowe's Jew is the precursor of Shylock; his Edward II resembles Shakespeare's Richard II. Marlowe first made use of a blank verse rhythm which soon became the recognized medium for the drama. His style is rich and rhetorical; some of his plays contain lines of great beauty, as in the passage when Faustus (who has sold his soul to the Devil) beholds the face of Helen of Troy:

Is this the face that launched a thousand ships  
And burnt the topless towers of Ilium?  
Sweet Helen, make me immortal with a kiss.

The university playwrights, of whom Marlowe was the greatest, were overshadowed by a young man from the country, who had been educated at a grammar school. William Shakespeare (1564-1616) was the son of a tradesman of Stratford-on-Avon, and went to the old guild-school of that town, which had been recently re-founded as King Edward VI's Grammar School. He worked with his father, married, and had three children. He was still under thirty when he came up to London to make his fortune—perhaps a year or two before the defeat of the Armada.

Shakespeare began his connexion with the theatre as an actor; but after a time he was employed in writing up parts for his fellow performers. When he first came to town most plays were performed in the courtyards of inns, which had galleries running round, in which the wealthier spectators paid to sit; other people stood in the 'pit' or ground of the inn-yard. But during Elizabeth's reign several covered-in theatres were built. It seems strange to think that these theatres were only allowed on sufferance; the city authorities regarded plays as opportunities for rowdyism and gatherings of the mob. It was for this reason that the first theatres were built in the suburbs, like Southwark and Shoreditch. There was practically no scenery; changes of place were indicated by a written notice, such as: 'Scene: A Rocky Coast.' The actors wore costume, but otherwise they had no artificial aid to their performance, and there were no women players.

Shakespeare's first play was probably *Love's Labour's Lost*, a satire on the affected court speech of the time. *Romeo and Juliet*

Shakespeare

The  
London  
TheatreShake-  
speare's  
Plays

was another early play, and was followed by the three parts of *Henry VI* (not all Shakespeare), *Richard II*, *Richard III*, and *King John*, all of which owe something to the influence of Marlowe. The comedies, such as *The Merchant of Venice*, *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*, *Twelfth Night*, and *As You Like It*, belong to the middle period of Shakespeare's writing life, as do the two parts of *Henry IV* and *Henry V*. The wonderful series of tragedies was written in the decade 1599-1609; for then appeared *Julius Caesar*, *Hamlet*, *Othello*, *Macbeth*, *King Lear*, and *Antony and Cleopatra*. In his latter years the note of tragedy was softened, and Shakespeare closed his active life with the writing of *Cymbeline*, *A Winter's Tale*, and *The Tempest*.

It is needless to say that Shakespeare's leading characters—Hamlet, Lear, Othello, Lady Macbeth, Shylock, or Falstaff—are among the finest productions of human genius. The problems with which the soul of Hamlet was tormented draw men's sympathy as much to-day as they did three hundred years ago; the tragedy of Lear or of Macbeth is still as haunting. To this supreme quality of the creation of character Shakespeare added a grandeur of poetic language never excelled in English. The deaths of his greatest characters called forth some of the poet's noblest lines, as in the famous 'To-morrow and to-morrow and to-morrow' speech spoken by Macbeth on the death of his queen;<sup>1</sup> in the great speeches pronounced by Antony over Caesar's murdered corpse;<sup>2</sup> or in the beautiful lines spoken by Cleopatra over the body of the dead Antony.<sup>3</sup>

His debt  
to Nature

Whatever lessons Shakespeare may have learnt about human character in the rough-and-tumble London world of theatre and tavern, he never lost the memories of his native Warwickshire. It was from there that he drew his sweetest images—from the flowers that grew in the Stratford lanes and from the trees and glades of the forest of Arden, which his imagination peopled with elves and fairies. The bank

whereon the wild thyme blows,  
Where oxlips and the nodding violet grows

<sup>1</sup> *Macbeth*, Act v, Scene v.

<sup>2</sup> *Julius Caesar*, Act III, Scenes i and ii.

<sup>3</sup> *Antony and Cleopatra*, Act IV, Scene xiii.

industry was decaying, and the modern capitalist and competitive system was beginning its history, Elizabeth's government managed to build up a national system of industry under the direct control of the Crown. The chief credit is due to the master-mind of Cecil, the typical 'new man' of Tudor making; and it is no small praise that this system endured well into the nineteenth century.

The great Statute of Artificers (or Apprentices), 1563, aimed at regulating the conditions of labour in all manufacturing industries throughout the country. It stressed the importance of agriculture by making it compulsory for all able-bodied men, who were not employed in certain specified trades, to work on the land. It fixed the hours of labour (5 a.m. to 7.30 p.m. in summer, dawn to dusk in winter). It enforced the old system of seven years' apprenticeship for industrial training, which had been weakened by the decay of the guilds and by the growth of the newer individual methods of industry. Finally the Justices of the Peace, 'calling unto them such discreet and grave persons as they shall think meet', were empowered to fix the rate of wages for all workmen in their locality, and to vary them to accord with the general level of prices.<sup>1</sup>

Statute of  
Artificers  
1563

This Labour Code for those at work was followed by a Poor Law System for those who could not or would not work. Various statutes (1563, 1572, 1598) were passed and were made permanent in the great Poor Law Code of 1601—which remained the law of the land for two centuries and more. The impotent poor were to be maintained; pauper children apprenticed; the able-bodied unemployed found work; and the idlers placed in Houses of Correction, or workhouse prisons, and forcibly trained to work. Every parish was expected to do all this through its own officials and to meet the expense out of a poor-rate levied on all its householders. The Justices of the Peace were empowered to assess the poor-rate and to appoint Overseers of the Poor to carry out the law. The Parish and the

The  
Elizabethan  
Poor Law

<sup>1</sup> The practice of *assessment of wages* gradually fell into disuse in the first half of the eighteenth century. It was revived—for trades in which 'the rate of wages is exceptionally low'—by the Trade Boards Act of 1909.

which the Fairy King remembered, his creator remembered too. Again and again in many beautiful lines he called to mind the flowering fields of his boyhood. And the lovely scenes in *A Midsummer-Night's Dream* and *As You Like It* owe their origin to the poet's early wanderings in the groves of Arden.

Shakespeare seems to have been curiously uninterested in the main political and religious problems of Tudor history. The great religious controversy of Catholic and Protestant is passed over in silence. We may judge, however, that the poet disliked the bigoted reformers, from the fact that he held up the Puritanical Malvolio to a scorn and ridicule from which nothing can ever rescue him. 'Dost thou think, because thou art virtuous, there shall be no more cakes and ale?' asks the drunken Sir Toby. The champion of cakes and ale is sympathetically drawn; the shocked Malvolio is not.

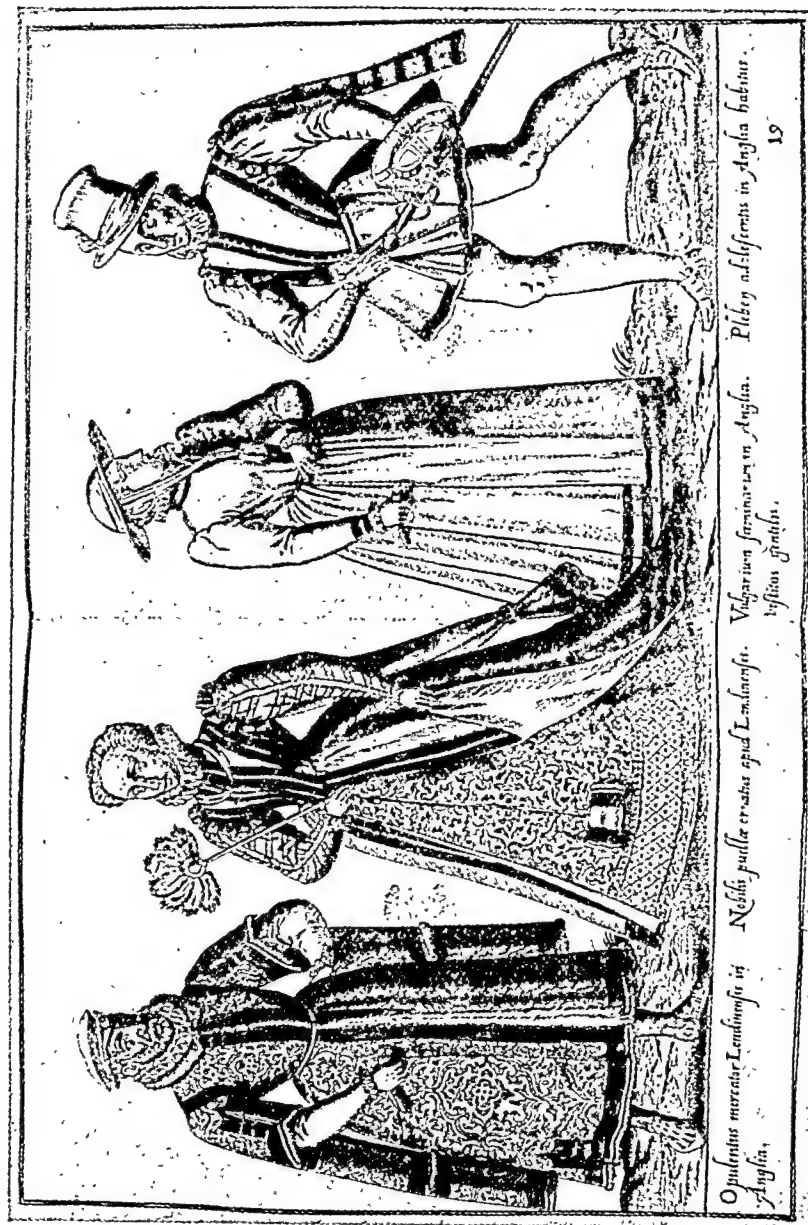
It has often been remarked that Shakespeare wrote *King John* without mentioning Magna Carta; and it is indeed probable that historical problems, as such, did not interest him. His historical personages, like Richard II and III, Henry IV and V, Julius Caesar and Antony, are interesting merely as characters, not on account of their political importance. No one, for example, would gather from reading *Julius Caesar* how great a part Caesar played in the world's history. But in one respect Shakespeare, like all Elizabethans, was politically minded: he was intensely patriotic. The conscious pride of the nation which had humbled the might of Spain breathes in the bombastic words which Shakespeare puts into the mouth of Henry V, or of Falconbridge, in *King John*:

Come the three corners of the world in arms,  
And we shall shock them. Nought shall make us rue,  
If England to itself do rest but true.

and even in the softer words of Gaunt in *Richard II*, which bespeak a real love of England:

This royal throne of kings, this sceptred isle,  
This earth of majesty, this seat of Mars,  
This other Eden, demi-paradise,  
This fortress built by Nature for herself  
Against infection and the hand of war . . .





#### ELIZABETHAN COSTUME

(From a book published in 1581.) From left to right are (1) The rich London merchant. (2) A noblewoman. (3) An ordinary housewife in her best dress. (4) A 'plebeian young man'.

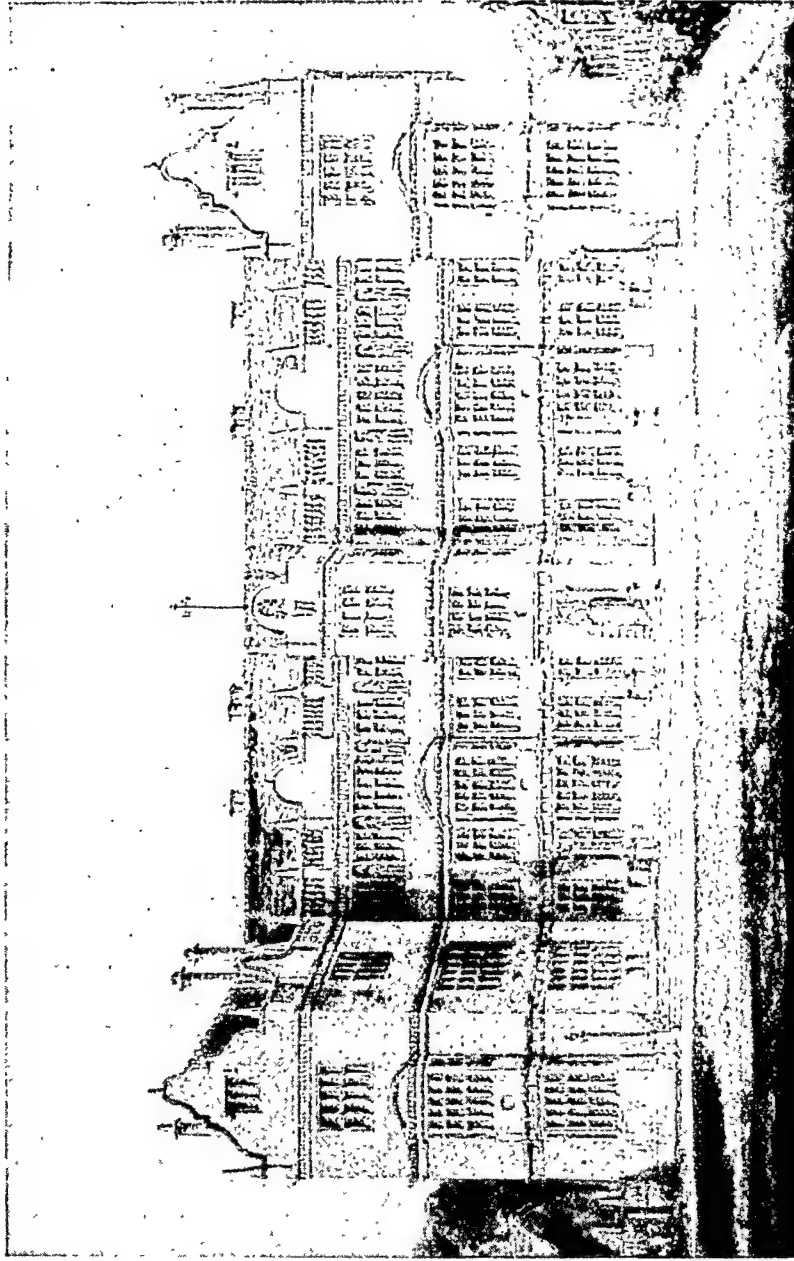
Shakespeare wrote for all ages, and his greatest characters can never lose their appeal. But his plays are also the mirror of his own time. Elizabethan England was an aristocratic society, and the lords and ladies who are the chief characters in most of Shakespeare's plays were real enough to him. It was then natural that an actor and playwright should portray an aristocratic society; for upon the favour of these lords the very existence of an actor depended. It was at the numerous festivities at their castles and halls that the strolling players had a welcome; even in London, certain noblemen, like Lord Southampton, Shakespeare's friend, protected the actors. 'Good my lord,' says Hamlet to Polonius, 'will you see the players well bestowed? Do you hear, let them be well used.'

## 2. *Social and Industrial Changes*

A brilliant age In order to see the Elizabethan Age as a whole we must look at both sides of the picture, and see both the brilliance and the squalor. The brilliance is obvious enough: a national Church founded, a great drama created, a powerful enemy defeated, the globe circumnavigated, the foundations of empire laid. And never, perhaps, in English history, have the habits of the upper classes of society improved so rapidly as in the century between the battle of Bosworth and the Spanish Armada. It is indeed a far cry from the bullying barons who intimidated local juries under Henry VI or who rode up and down England in the armies of York and Lancaster, to the polished courtiers of Queen Elizabeth. And yet, underneath the brilliant surface, perhaps the savage was not so very deeply buried. Those gay men of fashion, with their music and their poetry, their silks and satins and perfumes, could see dogs mauled by a bear or beggars whipped without a qualm, and 'the curious society which loved such fantasies and delicacies—how readily would it turn and rend a random victim with hideous cruelty!'<sup>1</sup>

The upper classes Great material progress was made by the upper classes and the merchants in the Elizabethan Age. The new aristocracy which succeeded the old baronage and the dispossessed monks lived on the fat of the land. Lord Leicester turned Kenilworth

<sup>1</sup> Lytton Strachey, *Elizabeth and Essex*.



#### ELIZABETHAN ARCHITECTURE

A typical large country house of the period. Notice the wings projecting at each end, and the square mullioned windows. (Montacute House, Somerset, from a water-colour by J. C. Buckler.)

Castle from a fortress into a palace; and the Great Lake which had once acted as a defence to that castle became a pleasure lake, where boats filled with gaily clad minstrels sang the praises of Gloriana, the queen. The change was typical of the times. With the peace that the Tudors brought after the Wars of the Roses, the day of the castle-fortress was happily past, and the 'great houses' of England were now being built. Charlecote House, Warwickshire—in the grounds of which, tradition says, the boy Shakespeare poached—was built in the first year of Elizabeth's reign. Many others followed,<sup>1</sup> for the successful merchants and newly ennobled lords required homes suitable to their new magnificence.

Next in rank to the new nobility came the country squires. Many of them were little better educated than the yokels around them, and they spent most of their days in hunting the deer or the hare. But they had one very important function to perform, for it was from the squires that the Justices of the Peace were drawn. These unpaid magistrates, whose office had been developing ever since the time of Edward III, managed the whole of the local government of England. Without their aid the government of the country could not have been carried on for a single month. They acted, as they still do, as magistrates administering local justice individually and in Quarter Sessions; they fixed wages; they saw to the upkeep of the roads; they licensed inns; and they performed many other functions. Their work was controlled by the Council,<sup>2</sup> which enforced the laws passed by Parliament.

The merchant class was closely concerned with the new England that was shaping. London was incomparably the greatest city in England, and the chief centre of trade; its population was multiplied five times in the century following

<sup>1</sup> Longleat House, Wiltshire; Burghley House and Castle Ashby, Northants.; Montacute House, Somerset (see illustration on p. 425); Bramhall Hall, Cheshire, and Wollaton Hall, Notts., are among the best known.

<sup>2</sup> The Council, not the Parliament, was the real pivot of Tudor government. We are still reminded of this fact by Cranmer's Prayer Book (1549), wherein we are bidden to pray for 'the Lords of the Council' and the 'Magistrates'—but a prayer for 'the High Court of Parliament' was not made a regular part of the Church service till 1662 (after the Puritan Revolution).

the birth of Elizabeth. Sir Thomas Gresham, a famous merchant, built the Royal Exchange, and also helped Cecil in the difficult task of improving the coinage.

The merchants of London, and to a lesser extent those of Bristol, were the mainstay of England's overseas trade. Medieval and Tudor ideas of business demanded that when a merchant traded with foreign lands he should do so as a member of a company, and before a company could trade it must have a royal charter. Foreign trade was often a dangerous business, and the merchants had to arm their ships—hence some sort of regulation, such as a charter conferred, was necessary to give authority to the company. The company was the descendant of the medieval Guild; and, like the Guild, it was jealous of all 'interlopers', that is, those unlicensed persons who dared to infringe a company's monopoly. In the earlier 'regulated' companies, like the Merchant Adventurers, each merchant used his own separate capital and made his own profit or loss. But the later type of company traded on a joint-stock; that is, the capital and the profits were pooled, and the stock-holders traded as a single firm, as is usual in modern business. The practice of pooling their capital enabled merchants to make longer voyages in larger ships. Thus they could attempt far larger enterprises than was possible with the older companies, and take risks which were too serious for single merchants to bear. An early example of a joint-stock company was the Muscovy Company (1553), but the most remarkable was the East India Company (1600)—and these were the forerunners of numerous trading companies that gradually gave England a world-wide commerce.

The industrial life of Tudor England was greatly enriched by Protestant refugees from the Continent, who brought new industries and craft secrets with them. The Dutch and Walloon settlers in East Anglia taught the 'New Draperies'—the making of fine cloth such as 'baize'—to Englishmen, while Huguenot settlers showed them how to make fine linen and silk.

Further, the growth of many new non-textile industries (coal, brass, salt, &c.) was so noticeable that the period 1550–1625 has been described as 'an early industrial revolution'. In fact England, which in 1550 had hardly any real industries

except the cloth manufacture, was by 1625 almost industrially self-sufficing.

The  
Yeomen

The great majority of the English nation, however—probably more than five-sixths—was still engaged in rural pursuits. The prosperous yeomen owned and farmed their own land, and were the backbone of the country; whereas two centuries later their 'small properties' unfortunately became 'exceedingly rare'. Below the yeomen were the peasants, the largest class and mostly illiterate. The prosperity of the wool trade<sup>1</sup> encouraged landowners to lay more and more land down for sheep-runs, and many a peasant thereby lost his homestead. The serious increase in unemployment, due to enclosures, was one of the main problems which statesmen set themselves to solve.<sup>2</sup>

Village  
industries

But industrial and rural England in the Tudor Age were not two areas sharply divided off from each other, as they are at the present day. The men, women ('spinsters'), and children who worked for the wool merchant generally worked in their own cottages. This 'domestic system', as it has been called, lasted until the invention of mechanical spindles (in the eighteenth century) gradually made the cottage industry obsolete. It is difficult to-day to picture a country in which the most important needs of life, such as food, housing, and clothing, were largely provided by the labour of each village. But there are a few places left in England where, if the old conditions have gone, we can still see the houses very much as they were in Tudor times. In East Anglia, in the Cotswolds, in the valleys of Wiltshire, and in the more remote of the Yorkshire dales (like Swaledale), farm and cottage, sturdily built of the local stone, look much the same as they did 300 years ago. But the old prosperity departed from these places with the coming of steam power. The spinners have gone; the farmers remain.

Changing  
conditions

In the Tudor Age the world was changing rapidly. In England there were three main factors (decay of guilds, enclosures,

<sup>1</sup> 'John Bull' was depicted as a clothier, who talked of 'the price of broadcloth, wool, and bays' (a 1712 pamphleteer).

<sup>2</sup> There were numerous Royal Commissions of Inquiry into 'Enclosures' in Tudor and Stuart times. For other references to enclosures, see pp. 321, 336, and 357-9.



#### THE GROWTH OF OVERSEAS TRADE

The East India Company was founded in 1600

An Indian painting showing an Englishman in Elizabethan dress. In the background is an Indian city (on the left) and a temple (on the right).

unemployment) which tended to upset the old order of things. The old guild system of industry was breaking down, and newer methods were developing. Competition was taking the place of custom. The Tudor epoch was a transition stage between the old guild system with its independent handicraftsmen and the factory with massed 'hands'. A class of 'captains of industry'—like the clothiers or drapers—was developing home industries on capitalist lines. Old and new industries were settling in villages and in the unchartered towns which were free from the old guild rules—such as Manchester, Sheffield, Leeds, and Birmingham. These and other places in Tudor times were still half village, half town. Yet at that time

'both in wealth and population Lavenham (the Suffolk wool town) was far more important than Birmingham. If any traveller in the 16th century had compared the mansion of the Springs, the fine houses of other manufacturers, the magnificent church, the great warehouses in Lavenham, with the broken-down manor house, the undistinguished church, the modest dwellings, the little tanneries and forges of Birmingham, and if he had been asked which of these two places was likely to become the second city in England, can we doubt that he would have chosen the flourishing seat of the greatest manufacture in the country?'<sup>1</sup>

Unemploy-  
ment

The enclosure system, while it benefited the wool-growers and the wool merchants, yet inflicted great hardship on the ploughmen. Further, unemployment was growing, and this was due to a variety of causes, e.g. enclosures, the destruction of the monasteries, the ending of private warfare, and the increase of population. The presence of a permanent body of workless men thus presented a problem in the sixteenth century as it does in the twentieth.

These factors, taken in conjunction, brought about what we should now call an 'economic crisis'. Times were hard for those who suffered by the changes. In Tudor times the government made it its business to take the whole economic sphere of life under its care, and this was one aspect of the growing national feeling. In the Middle Ages the town, and not the nation, had been the unit of industrial and commercial relations. Now that the guild and town system of regulating

<sup>1</sup> Gill, *Studies in Midland History*.





Justice were often only the Manor and its Lord under other names. In former ages the Church had enjoined charity as a Christian duty, and the monasteries had set the example in alms-giving. Henceforth the State (acting through the J.P.s supervised by the Council) took over as a national duty the task of providing for those who were living in destitution.

It was intended that this Poor Relief should apply only to those who were 'poor in very deed'. Far different was to be the treatment meted out to those rogues with whom England was 'exceedingly pestered':

Hark, hark, the dogs do bark,  
The beggars are coming to town!

The sturdy beggar was to be brought before the Justices and, if convicted, was to be whipped and 'burnt through the gristle of the right ear with a hot iron', and sent back to his native parish. If he had no parish 'settlement', as it was long called, then the beggar was to go to a House of Correction, 'there to be employed in work until he shall be placed in some service'. If a branded person 'fall again to any kind of roguish or vagabond trade of life', he should be treated as a felon. These harsh measures were intended to rid England of what was, doubtless, a crying evil. When there were no police the danger from thieves and wandering criminals was a serious one.

Shakespeare portrays one such rogue in Autolycus (*A Winter's Tale*), and in *King Lear* (Act II, Scene iii) he shows how the vagabonds used to terrify poor country folk. Nevertheless this harsh law no doubt pressed on many poor wretches who were vagrants through no fault of their own; though there were few to pity them or think, as Shakespeare thought, of their miserable life, in all weathers:

Poor naked wretches, wheresoe'er you are,  
That bide the pelting of this pitiless storm,  
How shall your houseless heads and unfed sides,  
Your loop'd and window'd raggedness, defend you  
From seasons such as these?<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *King Lear* (Act III, Scene iv).

## XIX

### JAMES I AND CHARLES I

#### I. *Puritans and Catholics*

JAMES VI of Scotland, who became James I of England in 1603, had been a king since infancy. The Scotland over which he had reigned had been as turbulent as ever; three out of the four Regents who had ruled during his boyhood had met violent deaths. Against the quarrelsome and bloodthirsty nobles the king had found allies in the ministers of the Kirk. But they were allies who were little to James's taste. He had high notions of his own importance, and of the importance of the office which he held. He firmly believed in the Divine Right of Kings—that kings are appointed by God<sup>1</sup> and are answerable for their actions, not to their subjects, but to God alone. When, therefore, he was told by Melville, Knox's successor, that he was but 'God's silly vassal', he found it hard to bear with the leaders of the Scottish Kirk.

All this he was now leaving behind—the nobles with their feuds, the elders of the Kirk with their preaching and their lack of respect for bishops and kings. He was coming, he thought, to a quiet kingdom, to rule over respectful subjects. But appearances are sometimes deceptive. James was perhaps deceived by the language of flattery with which he was everywhere addressed. But no flattery could be too gross for King James. He believed himself to be a ruler of wisdom and experience, and he thought—and he let his opinion be known—that his new subjects were fortunate to have such a king to rule over them.

Nevertheless James I had certain good qualities. He was <sup>His</sup> qualities

<sup>1</sup> Shakespeare makes Richard II say, 'Not all the water in the rough rude sea can wash the balm from an anointed king' (Act III, scene ii). And note how the doctrine of Divine Right is expressed in the Preface to the Authorized Version of the Bible: 'Great and manifold were the blessings, most dread Sovereign, which Almighty God, the Father of all mercies, bestowed upon us, the people of England, when he first sent Your Majesty's Royal Person to rule and reign over us.'

a kindly man and full of good intentions. He was also a scholar of some note, though he was too fond of 'unbuttoning his royal store of wisdom' for the benefit of his subjects. He was altogether too vain to be a great man. Henry of Navarre called him 'the wisest fool in Christendom'. And he had one fatal defect, commonly found in conceited people—he could not judge others. Such a man—a foreigner too—would never master the secret of Elizabeth's success; he would never rule the English people and yet retain their confidence.

Robert Cecil Of the surviving servants of the late queen, the two most distinguished were Sir Robert Cecil and Sir Walter Raleigh. Cecil was at once confirmed in his position as chief minister, and here at least the king made a wise choice. Cecil was made Earl of Salisbury. Raleigh, on the other hand, was soon involved in a plot, formed by his friend Lord Cobham, to dethrone the king in favour of his cousin, Lady Arabella Stuart. The unfortunate lady ended her days in prison, while Sir Walter himself spent thirteen years (1603–16) in the Tower during which time he wrote a *History of the World*.

The accession of James brought two blessings to England—the end of the Elizabethan war with Spain, and the union of the kingdoms of England and Scotland. The king himself, in his first speech to Parliament, explained this in characteristic fashion. 'The first of these blessings which God hath jointly with my person sent unto you is outward peace. The second is peace within . . . What God hath conjoined, let no man separate. I am the husband, and the whole isle is my lawful wife.' The union of the Crowns (1603), by putting an end to the prospect of war between England and Scotland, was in itself a great gain. James wished to go farther and sweep away all trade restrictions between the two countries. But national jealousy, expressed in the English Parliament, thwarted his design.

Peace with Spain, 1604 For making peace with Spain James deserves full credit, though it was resented by those persons who had profited from the plunder of Spanish ships on the high seas. It was one of his first actions, and he entrusted the negotiations to Cecil. The Spaniards refused to concede any trade rights with the Spanish Main to England, but Cecil refused to acknowledge their claim

to a monopoly. This question was therefore left for the future to decide.

The great question of the day, in 1603, was religion. The Anglican Settlement, as made by Elizabeth in the first year of her reign, had endured for her lifetime. But the position both of the Puritans within the Church of England, and of the Roman Catholics outside it, was unsatisfactory and even dangerous.<sup>1</sup> James underestimated the strength of the Puritan party, and, by taking sides against it, alienated a powerful section of the community. How powerful it was he was not aware, nor could he foresee that the hostility of the Puritans would produce a Puritan Revolution and bring his successor to the scaffold.

The  
religious  
question

During his progress from the north James was presented with the so-called Millenary Petition, said to be signed by 1,000 Puritan clergymen of the Church of England. The petitioners asked, in effect, for some toleration of Puritan practices; they protested against the use of the surplice; they objected to declaring their belief in the absolute truth of the Prayer Book. The king decided to call a conference of clergy at Hampton Court (1604) to consider these matters, and at the same time to make his own position clear.

The Puritans hoped much from James, for he had been brought up in the Presbyterian Kirk of Scotland. But James feared that the spread of Puritanism in England would lead to the growth of that democratic temper which he so much detested, and which he knew so well in Scotland. He made this clear at the conference. 'If you aim at a Scottish Presbytery,' he told the Puritan clergy, 'it agreeth as well with a monarchy as God with the devil. . . . Then Jack, Tom, Will and Dick shall meet and at their pleasure censure me and my council. . . I thus apply it . . . *No bishop, no king.*' 'If this be all your party hath to say, (he concluded) I will make them conform themselves or else will harry them out of the land.' With these ominous words the subject was closed. But the hostility of the Puritans to the House of Stuart was decided then and there. Some of them took refuge in Holland and later sailed in the *Mayflower* to America (1620).

Hampton  
Court Con-  
ference  
1604

<sup>1</sup> See above, Chapter XVII, Sect. 7.

One good thing, however, came out of the Hampton Court Conference. It was then that King James appointed a committee to make a new translation of the Bible. The Authorized Version, as it is called, was published in 1611, and has done much to make the English language the noble instrument it is. It also deeply affected the lives of ordinary men and women, to whom the Bible was their only literature. The old Scripture stories, told in homely yet noble words, sank deep into the hearts of that generation. The Bible was the school of the Puritans, who were accustomed to see, as the Hebrews saw, the close relations of God and man in the doings of everyday life.

Treatment  
of Catholics

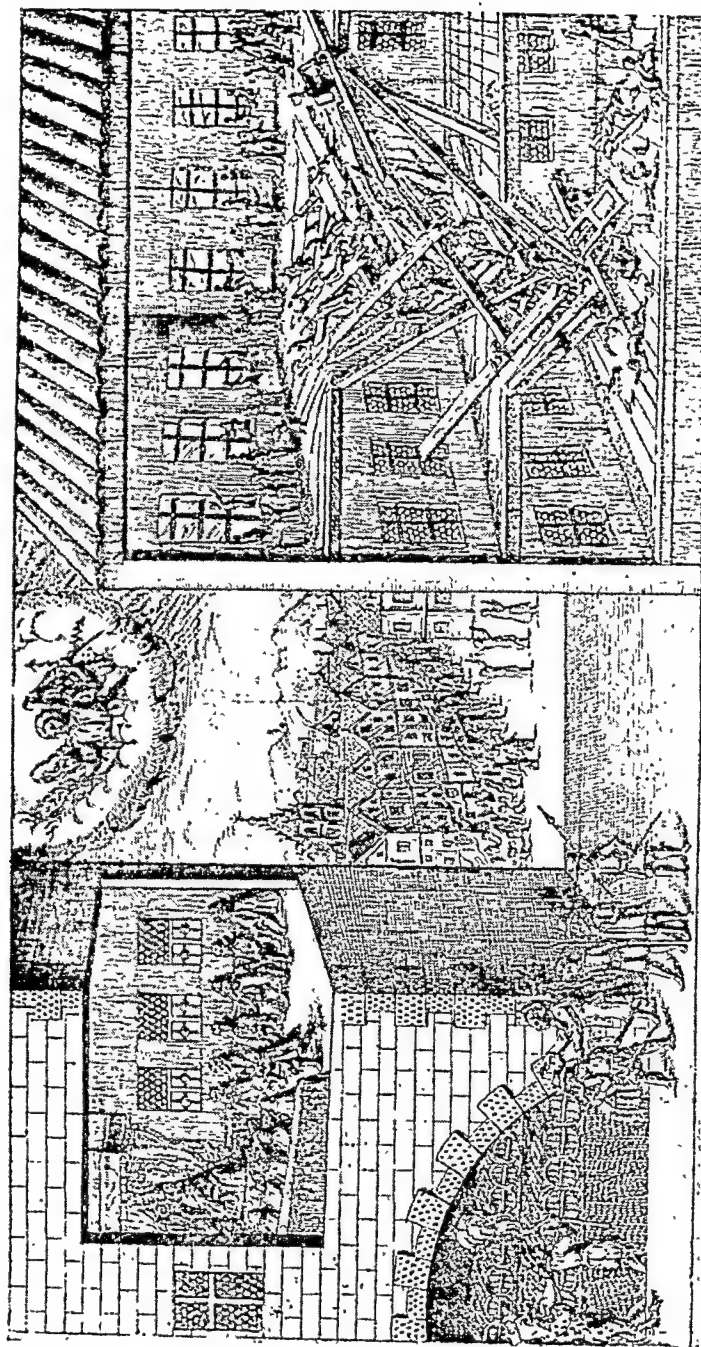
While James alienated the Puritans by his words, and actually ejected 300 Puritan clergy from their livings (1604), he showed a different spirit towards his Roman Catholic subjects. The later Elizabethan laws against them were, as we have seen,<sup>1</sup> extremely harsh. James began by lightening the burden. He at first relaxed the laws against recusants, and allowed priests—so long living in hiding in Catholic manor-houses—to go about their work unmolested. These measures soon revealed the fact that the number of Catholics was far greater than had been supposed, and Protestants became alarmed at the large gatherings of Catholics, who no longer feared to go to Mass. The king, in alarm, then changed his policy, and ordered all priests to quit the country (1604). Many Catholics, naturally incensed at this quick change of front, were ready to rebel. It was then that the famous Gunpowder Plot was hatched.

Gunpowder  
Plot, 1605

Robert Catesby, a Midland squire, was the originator of the Gunpowder Plot, and he was joined by several other gentlemen of the west Midlands. Their object was to blow up the Houses of Parliament so that king, lords, and commons would perish in one terrific conflagration. Then, when the capital was thrown into confusion, the plotters would rise and help to set up a Catholic government.

It was a desperate scheme, and it might have succeeded. That it did not was due to one Tresham, a conspirator less iron-nerved than the rest. He warned his cousin, Lord Mont-

<sup>1</sup> See above, pp. 390 and 411.



### THE GUNPOWDER PLOT

A contemporary print depicting what would have happened if the plot had succeeded

eagle: 'They shall receive a terrible blow, this Parliament, and they shall not see who hurts them.' Such was the warning, and some among the Council suspected the use of gunpowder. One of them examined the cellars under the House of Lords. There he found Guy Fawkes, the sentinel detailed to keep watch over the barrels of gunpowder, which were concealed beneath a load of faggots. It was the evening of the day before the meeting of Parliament. Guy Fawkes had already suspected that the plot was betrayed, but he stuck to his post in the faint hope that he might after all succeed in his fearful task. He was seized where he stood, taken to the Tower, and put to the torture. But he would not reveal the names of his accomplices until he knew that they had all been taken or slain. Their rebellion had failed, and Catesby himself was slain. Guy Fawkes was hanged, and to this day his effigy is burnt in our streets. Father Garnet, the head of the English Jesuits, was also seized and put to death for complicity in the plot. The horror caused by the discovery of Gunpowder Plot naturally reacted—like the Smithfield burnings—against the English Catholics, and for two hundred years the evil impression remained. It was long before the average Englishman got rid of the absurd idea that every Catholic was a traitor and every Jesuit a murderer.

5 Nov. 1605

## 2. *The Puritan Opposition*

First Parliament 1604-10 The first Parliament of James I (1604-10) was the longest in his reign. The House of Commons, James soon found, was a very different body from the subservient assembly he had hoped to find ready to listen to his royal words of wisdom. The members were chosen from the gentry of England—the squire class who ruled the countryside and were now ready to share in the central government. There were about 500 members, 400 of whom represented the boroughs. The borough members, however, were not usually townsmen, but squires chosen from the neighbourhood. Such were the men who formed the backbone of the opposition to the Stuart kings.

Divine Right The gradual growth of this opposition was due to several causes. It was partly due to the growth of Puritanism; for the



men who believed in choosing their own form of religion and were prepared to fight for it were also ready to stand up for the liberties of Parliament. But it was partly the work of James himself. His belief in his 'Divine Right' to do as he liked stood in the way of any possible agreement with the Commons. The doctrine of Divine Right was not new. Its clerical and legal exponents found support for it in history and scripture. Its opponents, on the other hand, looked back to Magna Carta which they claimed (as no one dreamt of claiming in 1215) to be the charter of the liberties of the whole English people.

The Commons were by no means prepared to give way to the king. They summed up their own view of their privileges in a document known as *A Form of Apology* (1604), in which they claimed free debate 'of right and due inheritance',<sup>1</sup> and not, as the king tartly informed them, 'of grace only'. The argument was never-ending. James was still lecturing the same Parliament in 1610. 'The state of monarchy', he said, 'is the supremest thing on earth.' The House of Commons, he proceeded, must be careful to confine itself to respectful advice and 'not meddle with the main points of government; that is my craft; to meddle with that were to lesson me. I am now an old king. . . . I must not be taught my office.'

King and Commons were now in conflict not only about religion but also about taxation. The king was still expected, as in medieval times, to 'live of his own'; in other words, to meet the expenses of both court and government out of his regular income. This income was derived (i) from old feudal dues and rents on Crown lands; (ii) from the customs, that is, duties paid on goods, e.g. wool and leather, which belonged by ancient custom<sup>2</sup> to the king; and (iii) from Tonnage and Poundage, a separate levy which Parliament granted the king for life at the beginning of every reign<sup>3</sup>, consisting of the duties

<sup>1</sup> Yet Elizabeth had warned Parliament that it was not for every one to 'speak what he liketh' but to say 'aye or no, with some short declaration of his reason therein'.

<sup>2</sup> From the time of Edward I (see Chapter VIII).

<sup>3</sup> First granted to Edward III; granted for life to Richard II and the Lancastrian kings. From the time of Edward IV it had been customary to make the grant for life at the outset of each reign.

paid on every tun of wine and pound of merchandise imported into the country. But all this was not nearly enough. James was a spendthrift, and kept up an expensive court. Further, owing largely to the influx of gold and silver from the New World, the value of money was only half as much as it had been a century earlier. Government was now more active and therefore more costly, and the time had come when the people must be taxed in time of peace as well as war. James therefore tried other means<sup>1</sup> of raising money, such as the sale of monopolies. He also imposed, without a parliamentary grant, additional duties known as 'impositions'. A merchant called Bate who refused to pay this extra duty imposed on his currants lost his case in the Courts (1606); and James's Book of Rates (1608) contained still more impositions. There was an attempt at an agreement between king and Parliament, known as the Great Contract (1610), by which the king would have received a regular income of £200,000 from parliamentary taxation in return for giving up feudal dues. But the scheme fell through.

Not long after this James dissolved his first Parliament (1610).<sup>2</sup> He called another in 1614, which the humorists called the Addled Parliament, because it did not hatch a single Bill. It sat for only two months, and refused to vote a penny till grievances had been discussed. James dissolved it in anger, and ruled without a Parliament till 1621. The sale of monopolies continued, as did impositions. Wealthy citizens were also called upon, on three separate occasions, to pay benevolences or free gifts. As James put it, he was obliged to 'try the

<sup>1</sup> The Crown derived an income from:

1. Rents on Crown lands and old feudal dues.
2. The ancient customs.
3. Tonnage and Poundage.

and this was often supplemented by:

4. Special taxes called subsidies, which could only be levied by consent of Parliament.
5. Additional duties on imports, known as impositions.
6. The sale of monopolies and patents.
7. The collection of what were fictitiously called 'benevolences'.

<sup>2</sup> The first Parliament (1604-10) held five sessions spread over six years. The sessions were short; the first Parliament actually sat for about twenty-three months all told.

dutiful affections of his loving subjects in another way'; in reality they were forced to make the 'gift'.

James lost his eldest son Prince Henry, and his chief minister Lord Salisbury, in the same year (1612). On the death of Cecil he chose a worthless Scotsman, called Robert Carr, to be the recipient of his confidence. Carr was made Duke of Somerset, and for some years he continued to flourish in the sunshine of the royal favour. But after he had been involved in several unpleasant scandals—including a trial for murder—he was disgraced (1616). His successor was George Villiers, a court favourite who was created first Earl and then Duke of Buckingham. He was a worthier, if not a wiser, man than Carr, and the king gave him his entire confidence.

For the last years of the reign Buckingham was the real ruler of England. He at first favoured a return to an anti-Spanish policy. He persuaded James to release Raleigh from the Tower and send him on an expedition to Guiana (1617), where, the old adventurer predicted, gold could be found in great quantities. Raleigh had to promise not to fight the Spaniards. But the next year he was back in England. He had found no gold, and had killed some Spaniards in a skirmish, and lost his own son. Gondomar, the Spanish ambassador, demanded the head of the old hero. Elizabeth had refused a like request for Drake's death, but James sacrificed Raleigh, and he was executed (1618). Owing largely to Buckingham's influence, James was now hand-in-glove with Gondomar, whom he treated as though he were an English minister. He relaxed the laws against Catholics, which had been stringently enforced since the Gunpowder Plot. Finally he decided to marry his heir, Prince Charles, to a Spanish princess.

Meanwhile a storm-cloud had burst over Europe. The terrible Thirty Years' War, which devastated Germany, had just broken out. Frederick of the Palatinate (on the Rhine), who was James's son-in-law,<sup>1</sup> accepted the offer of the crown of Bohemia (1620) when the Bohemians rebelled against the Emperor. Frederick was chosen because he was a Calvinist; but he had little success, and soon lost Bohemia and the Palatinate

<sup>1</sup> Frederick married Elizabeth, daughter of James I, and was the father of the famous Prince Rupert.

as well, the latter state being overrun by the Spaniards. James attempted the role of peacemaker. He asked the Spaniards to restore the Palatinate to his son-in-law, and he hoped that they would do so when Prince Charles married the Infanta. At the same time, he decided to make a show of using force—a device which did not deceive the Spanish ambassador, who knew quite well that James would never go to war on his own account. But neither Gondomar nor James had taken into consideration the strength of public opinion which now obliged the king to threaten war against Spain on behalf of his Protestant son-in-law.

Third  
Parliament  
1621

As war could not be waged without money, Parliament had to be summoned (1621). The Commons were in no mood for trifling. They began by asserting their ancient right (not used since 1449) to impeach the king's ministers. Francis Bacon, the Lord Chancellor, 'the wisest, brightest, meanest of mankind', was impeached for receiving bribes; he was found guilty and deprived of his office. Flushed by this success, the Commons demanded the abandonment of the Spanish marriage and war with Spain in earnest. All the old hatred of Spain, all the fury of Puritan feeling against Catholics, was behind this demand. The king lectured in his usual strain. He told the members not 'to meddle with anything concerning our government or deep matters of state, and, namely, not to deal with our dearest son's match with the daughter of Spain, nor to touch the honour of that king'. James also reminded the members that their privileges were 'derived from the grace and permission of our ancestors and us'. They replied in a formal Protestation (1621) that their privileges were the 'ancient and undoubted birthright and inheritance of the subjects of England'. Trembling with rage, the king with his own hand tore the offending protest from the Commons' Journal—and dissolved Parliament.

Prince  
Charles in  
Spain

A year later the king sent Charles and Buckingham in disguise to Spain. They were not allowed to see the Infanta until they had promised concessions for Roman Catholics in England. This they were neither able nor willing to do. So the prince returned in disgust to England without a Spanish bride, much to the satisfaction of the English people, who organized a dis-

play of public rejoicing to celebrate the occasion. Buckingham then decided to abandon the Spanish marriage project. He persuaded his master to summon another Parliament (1624),<sup>Fourth Parliament 1624</sup> and prepare to join Denmark and Holland, who were already involved in the 'Thirty Years' War. For the moment the minister was popular. He dispatched an army—'a rabble of raw and poor rascals'—to Holland. But they had few provisions and were left to starve on the island of Walcheren. King James did not live to see the end of this ill-fated expedition.<sup>Death of James I 1625</sup> He died the same winter (1625).

Posterity has not been merciful to the memory of James I; and indeed it must be admitted that this self-important Scot cuts rather a ridiculous figure. But his character was not without its nobler side. His effort to become the peacemaker of Europe, though it failed, was a praiseworthy one. His was certainly a more enlightened attitude than the fanatical hatred of Spain which possessed the Commons. James, in fact, was free from the two prejudices which afflicted the majority of his subjects—the anti-Catholic and the anti-Spanish mania, which were two aspects of the same thing. But he left his son to deal as best he might with problems which his own reign had raised.

Mutterings of a conflict between Crown and Parliament had been heard under Elizabeth (1597, 1601); but with James I the long conflict began openly. Throughout the Stuart struggle (1603–89), four points at issue between king and Parliament constantly recur. There was the constitutional struggle—the liberties of Parliament asserted against the theory of Divine Right, seen in James's reign in the Form of Apology of 1604 and the Protestation of 1621. In the religious struggle James sided with the bishops against the Puritans, as at the Hampton Court Conference of 1604. In foreign policy the Puritans in Parliament were opposed to marriage alliances with either Spain or France, because these were Roman Catholic countries, and towards the end of the reign they clamoured for war with Spain and support for the king's Protestant son-in-law. Finally there were certain practical abuses—monopolies, benevolences, and impositions; and when the last were contested in Bates's case (1606), the judges claimed that the king had an absolute power over and above the ordinary law. Thus, in Gardiner's

His  
character

The Stuart  
Problem

4.

words, 'though James I's reign did not witness a revolution, it witnessed that loosening of the bonds of sympathy between the ruler and the ruled that is often the precursor of revolution'<sup>1</sup>

### 3. *Charles I and Buckingham*

**Charles I**  
**1625-49** The great struggle between Crown and Parliament, begun in his father's reign, was fought to a finish in the reign of Charles I (1625-49). The defeat of Charles in the Civil War was a great turning-point in English history, for it was then determined that England should tread a path different from that taken by all the other countries of Europe. In 1625 it was said, 'England is the last monarchy that retains her liberties—let them not perish now!' Absolute monarchy, overthrown here in the Puritan Revolution, reached its greatest triumphs in Europe in the century following the execution of Charles I.

**His character** Charles I was in many ways an attractive man. But he shared with his father the unfortunate handicap that he never understood the people over whom he ruled. His education had not fitted him to do so. Brought up from infancy to believe that kings ruled by Divine Right, he thought it beneath his dignity to take his people, or their representatives, into his confidence. His manners were dignified and his private life was beyond reproach. He had strong artistic interests, and was the patron of the architect Inigo Jones<sup>2</sup> and of Vandyck, who painted the portraits which have made Charles's figure so familiar. His artistic nature accounted for his love of ritual, and he was much more of a High Churchman than his father. But though a man of taste, Charles was an unsatisfactory ruler. He seldom knew his own mind and he was unreliable in his dealings with others. Fundamentally weak, though by no means ignoble in character, he was usually under the influence of a stronger personality.

Such a personality was in charge of the English government

<sup>1</sup> Other notable events in James I's reign were the settlement of Virginia (1608) and New England (1620) (see Chapter XXII), and the Plantation of Ulster (1611) (see Chapter XXIII).

<sup>2</sup> See below, Chapter XXIV.



CHARLES I. The picture is a good illustration of rich Stuart costume. Note the ruff, and the long flowing hair, moustache, and pointed beard

Marriage of  
Charles I  
1625

at his accession. The gay, handsome, dashing Duke of Buckingham, who always knew *his* own mind, had a dozen plans ready to pour into the willing ears of the king. Buckingham was now (1625) committed to a French alliance. The marriage of Charles to Henrietta Maria, sister of Louis XIII, had already been arranged; it was celebrated (by proxy) shortly after Charles's accession and before Parliament could meet to ask awkward questions. Such questions were to be expected, for Buckingham had promised the last Parliament that no relief to English Catholics should follow the French marriage. On the other hand he had promised Louis XIII (in the marriage treaty) the exact contrary! The Puritans objected to the new queen because she was a Catholic; they feared she would bring up her children in her own faith, and in this respect their fears were fulfilled. The queen was only fifteen at the time of her marriage, which was at first an unhappy one; but after Buckingham's death she became reconciled to her husband. Henceforth she exerted a strong influence over the weaker mind of Charles. Her love of pleasure, and her fondness for dancing and play-acting, gave great offence to the Puritans.

First  
Parliament  
1625

Charles's first Parliament (1625) met in truculent mood. The king's known hostility to Puritanism gave offence, and the Commons were not prepared to be generous in the matter of supplies unless he was prepared—which he certainly was not—to reform the Church on Puritan lines. They voted a grant of £140,000—hardly a tenth of the amount required—to wage a war against Spain. They also voted tonnage and poundage duties, but for one year only. As it was customary for this grant to be made to a new sovereign for life,<sup>1</sup> Charles naturally felt insulted. But the Commons realized that by controlling finance they might control the king's policy. They wished to be consulted about foreign affairs, and to discuss religious reform; they also wished to make sure that the government was in trustworthy hands, and, if not, to criticize the king's ministers. All this was contrary to Charles's intentions, and he soon dismissed his first Parliament (1625).

The king entrusted Buckingham with the conduct of the Spanish war; Sir Edward Cecil was sent with a fleet to Cadiz.

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 439, footnote 3.



This expedition, owing largely to Buckingham's inefficient organization, was a complete failure, and Cecil returned with nothing to show for the money expended. Charles then decided to call a second Parliament (1626). The leaders of the Commons at this time were Sir John Eliot, Sir Thomas Wentworth and John Pym. Eliot, a fiery Cornishman, made a long speech against Buckingham and his conduct of the war: 'Our honour is ruined, our ships are sunk, our men perished, not by the enemy, not by chance, but by those we trust.' This tirade offended the king, who told the Speaker: 'I would not have the House to question my servants, much less one that is so near me.' The debate went on; Charles tried threats. 'Remember', he said, 'that Parliaments are altogether in my power for their calling, sitting and dissolution; and therefore as I find the fruits of them good or evil, they are to continue or not to be.' Soon the news arrived that Cardinal Richelieu, the great French minister, had made peace with Spain—a bitter blow to England. After further debate the Commons formally impeached the Duke of Buckingham at the Bar of the House of Lords for misconducting the war. Charles's reply was to dissolve Parliament (1626).

Second  
Parliament  
1626

Sir John  
Eliot

Raising money by a forced loan—which offended the trading community of London—Charles then proceeded to equip more ships and men in order to continue the war. Next year he quarrelled with his brother-in-law, Louis XIII, who not unnaturally asked for the terms of the marriage treaty to be carried out. But instead of granting relief to Catholics, Charles, who was now on bad terms with his queen, actually drove her French attendants from England. By the end of the year (1627) England and France were at war. Buckingham, optimistic as ever, suggested sending a fleet to relieve La Rochelle, the Huguenot stronghold on the Bay of Biscay, which Richelieu was besieging. Buckingham himself commanded the English attack, and landed on the Isle de Ré, near Rochelle. But he could not relieve the town, and retired to England for reinforcements.

The French  
War, 1627

Charles now summoned his third Parliament (1628-9). Again Sir John Eliot thundered against the king's methods of raising money, and defended the rights of the House. Finally the

Third  
Parliament  
1628-9

Petition of  
Right, 1628

grievances of the Commons were embodied in the Petition of Right (1628), which passed both Houses, and to which the king gave his assent on condition that more money was voted for the French war. This famous Petition, which thus became an Act of Parliament, was intended to limit the king's arbitrary power in four directions; billeting of soldiers, martial law, taxation, and imprisonment. First, he was not to become a military despot. The members recalled how Rome had fallen 'through the insolency of soldiers'; they knew the country was full of complaints of the behaviour of Buckingham's troops who had been billeted on private citizens. Henceforth such billeting was to be illegal: 'no man is forced to take soldiers, but inns, and they be paid for them.' At the same time, courts martial were forbidden to try civilians. These two clauses of the Petition of Right have been called the 'charter of the most civilian nation of Europe'; and a healthy dislike of militarism has been characteristic of England from that day to this. Another clause of the Petition provided that 'no man hereafter be compelled to make or yield any gift, loan, benevolence, tax or such-like charge, without common consent by Act of Parliament'. Now the king had not only raised such taxes, but had recently imprisoned eighty gentlemen for refusing to pay them; he had done so 'without any cause showed', and he had not brought them to trial.

Murder of  
Buckingham,  
1628

In the same year Buckingham went down to Portsmouth to embark once more for France. While he was there he was assassinated by a discontented officer named Felton. London broke into unseemly rejoicings at the news; and the mob cheered when the duke's coffin passed through the streets. Charles was distracted with grief; but he went on with the war. The fleet sailed for La Rochelle, only to find that Richelieu had constructed a mole across the harbour to prevent the relief of the city. The expedition was thus foiled, and the Huguenots surrendered to the Cardinal (1628).

End of the  
third Par-  
liament  
1629

Next year the third Parliament came to an end in dramatic fashion. The Commons were as usual discussing grievances when the king decided on an adjournment. As Sir John Eliot rose to address the House, the Speaker (who wished to carry out the king's orders) attempted to leave and so end the debate.

Thereupon the king, holding him down in his chair while the Commons dug up old passed Eliot's Three Resolutions (2 March 1629), which 'wrested' innovations in religion' and the 'introduction of popery', and declared that any one proposing or paying tonnage and poundage not granted by Parliament was a traitor to 'the kingdom and commonwealth'. When the resolutions had been passed the Speaker was released, the doors were opened, and Parliament was dissolved (1629). After this scene in the House Charles proclaimed that the Commons had been attempting 'to exert a universal, over-swaying power, which belongs only to me and not to them'. Such a power Parliament had certainly not exerted in Tudor times; yet it is difficult to see how it could have acted otherwise without sacrificing political liberty. But it seemed to Charles that Parliament's attitude towards supplies and its intolerance in religion made it difficult to carry on the government at all. He was 'ashamed that his cousins of France and Spain should have accomplished a work (an absolute monarchy) which he had scarcely begun'. Many Puritans migrated overseas to New England rather than live under the arbitrary government which now followed.

#### 4. 'Personal' Government

Having failed to rule with the help of Parliament, Charles now decided to follow his father's example and rule without a Parliament, nor did he summon another for eleven years. His first business was to bring the war with France and Spain to an end, for obviously he could not hope to finance it. Peace was accordingly made with both countries (1630).

Compared with the normal form of government in European countries the personal or absolute rule of Charles I was moderate. Compared with the rule of a tyrant like Henry VIII it was mild. Charles did not, like Henry VIII, send the noblest men in England to the scaffold; there were no hangings and burnings. In some respects the severity of the laws was relaxed. Torture, which had been employed against the misguided but heroic Guy Fawkes, was discontinued under Charles I and has not since been used in England. The country was, in some respects, becoming more humane; and Charles

Character  
of Charles's  
rule

himself was not a cruel man. were embodied in the sometimes called 'The Eleven Years' Tyranny Houses, and was no tyranny if judged either by contemporary standards or by the late Tudor standards. But it offended an influential section of his subjects. Because it failed he had to pay the penalty.

William  
Laud

The king's chief adviser during these eleven years was William Laud, bishop of London, a former President of St. John's College, Oxford. Laud was made Archbishop of Canterbury (1633) and henceforth his influence was paramount in both Church and State. He directed the religious policy of the government, and after the death (1635) of the Treasurer, Weston, he became, in effect, also responsible for the finances of the kingdom. Laud's great friend was Sir Thomas Wentworth, a parliamentary leader who had formerly opposed the king through distrust of Buckingham. Wentworth became disgusted with the fanaticism of the Puritan faction; to him, as to Laud, 'order (in Church and State) was Heaven's first law'. And Wentworth was also much more suited to be a servant of the king than a leader of Parliament, for he was a man of autocratic temper. The murder of Buckingham, moreover, removed his chief objection to the king's party, and seeing his opportunity he went over to Charles's side, and opposed his former associates. Charles made him a peer (1628) and President of the Council of the North (1628-32), and then Lord Deputy of Ireland (1632-9). In Ireland he ruled with a rod of iron, for he raised an army to enforce his will. 'I am for *thorough*, my lord', he wrote to Laud, whom he urged to follow the same relentless methods. But it was easier to crush a backward country like Ireland with an army than to rule England without one.

'Thorough'

The two chief questions at issue were, as in James's reign, finance and religion. Let us consider these in turn. The king broke the spirit, if not the letter, of the provisions of the Petition of Right, to which he had so recently given his assent. He imprisoned Sir John Eliot—the champion of Parliamentary privilege—and other M.P.s for seditious words in the last Parliament; and Eliot, who refused to apologize, died in the Tower. The king's chief difficulties being financial, he raised money by the hated methods of forced loans, the sale

of monopolies to companies, and other questionable means. His lawyers, too, dug up old laws which had never been repealed, and so Charles 'wrested the law to his authority'. Old Norman and Angevin Forest Laws were revived: it was found that many landowners had built on or enclosed land formerly part of royal forests, and they were fined by the Star Chamber. Many gentlemen of means were also forced to receive—in accordance with Edward I's practice—the 'honour' of knight-hood—and had to pay for the privilege.

The tax which aroused most wrath was the levying of Ship-Money. Charles wished to repair the ships of the Royal Navy, which had been so neglected in his father's time that the fine Navy which had beaten the Armada had almost disappeared; he hoped to bring the Navy up to the level of the Dutch and French fleets and to protect our shores against pirates. The first writ of Ship-Money (1634) was issued to the ports only, and this was in accordance with custom. But from 1635 onwards writs were issued to the inland counties as well, and it was this innovation which aroused opposition. The real grievance was that Ship-Money had been levied without consent of Parliament, and was therefore contrary to the Petition of Right. John Hampden, a Buckinghamshire squire and the friend of Pym and Oliver Cromwell, refused to pay the tax. Hampden's case came (1638) before the Exchequer Court, and a bare majority of the judges decided against him. They argued that it was the king's legal right to impose Ship-Money in a case of emergency, and that 'His Majesty is the sole judge, both of the danger, and when and how the same is to be prevented and avoided'.

It was, however, by their religious policy that Charles and Laud most inflamed the temper of the opposition. Charles was opposed to the Puritans by religious conviction, being what is called a 'High Churchman'. Laud was of the same way of thinking. He had a real love for beautiful things, for stained glass and ornament, and for fine music. He had a reverence for sacred places, which many Englishmen had not. He did good work in restoring order and decency in the Church and its services; he stopped, for example, the custom of using St. Paul's Cathedral as a meeting-place for gossips and merchants.

Raising money

Ship-Money

John Hampden's Case, 1638

Religious Policy of Laud

The plain services and bare buildings which the Puritans favoured were alike abhorrent to him. But, like his enemies, Laud knew not the meaning of toleration. He forced them, as they would have forced him if they could, to conform to his view. Though a man of taste and learning, he had a narrow, pedantic mind, and little human sympathy. In addition he had a hasty temper and a sharp tongue, and he could not (says Clarendon) 'debate anything without some commotion'. In short, Laud was a most unsuitable man to be at the head of the English Church at a time when the breach between two factions was widening daily.

Laud put down Puritan conventicles with a firm hand. He kept a close watch on the press, and fined many Puritan speakers and authors by means of the Court of High Commission (which had been set up by Elizabeth). One of his victims was William Prynne, a barrister, who had written a long book about the wickedness of stage-plays, and who was eventually condemned, along with three others, for libelling the bishops (1637). These men were sentenced to pay a heavy fine, to be imprisoned for life, and to have their ears cut off. But the people of London showed their disapproval by giving the victims a great ovation in the pillory. However, before we condemn Laud too heartily, it should be remembered that he put no man to death for his religious opinions—at a time when torture and death by burning were the common lot of heretics in Spain and elsewhere.

Strict discipline was the key-note of Laud's system. The Court of High Commission, of which he was president, punished a great variety of offenders, from the clergyman who had dared to preach without a surplice to the courtier who had ill-treated his wife, or the innkeeper who had allowed drinking on Sundays. Laud's strict rule, of course, was detested by the pleasure-loving. But it was hated still more by the Puritans, who compared it with the work of the Inquisition. During these years (1629-40) thousands of Puritans emigrated to America rather than live under what they considered a tyranny. So they went to Massachusetts—and there set up an equally harsh religious tyranny of their own!<sup>1</sup>

Puritan  
emigration

<sup>1</sup> See below, Chapter XXII.

The year 1637—with Prynne's case (religion) and Hampden's case (finance)—was the real beginning of the crisis of Charles I's reign. Milton in his *Lycidas* (1637) expressed the Puritan's view of the Laudian system: 'the hungry sheep look up and are not fed', while 'the grim wolf (Rome) with privy paw, daily devours apace, and nothing said'. And in the same year Laud sought to apply his methods to Scotland.

Charles and Laud decided that the northern kingdom must be brought into line with England. Laud therefore prepared a liturgy, similar to the English Prayer Book, which was to be used instead of Knox's Liturgy in all Scottish churches. This provoked a riot in St. Giles's, Edinburgh. When the Dean 'in the whites' (surplice) was about to read the new liturgy for the first time, Jenny Geddes flung a stool at his head. Laud also decided that bishops instead of the Presbyteries should rule over the Scottish Kirk. These measures provoked a national resistance in Scotland, and the National Covenant<sup>1</sup> (1638) was now signed enthusiastically throughout the land. The wording of the Covenant throws a lurid light on the fierce passions of the Scots, particularly in the passage where the Anglican system is compared with that of Rome. It condemned Laud and all his works, together with 'the usurped authority of that Roman anti-Christ . . . all his tyrannous laws made against our Christian liberty . . . his devilish mass . . . his holy water, baptizing of bells, conjuring of spirits, crossing, anointing . . . his worldly monarchy and wicked hierarchy, his erroneous and bloody decrees made at Trent, with all the subscribers and approvers of that cruel and bloody band conjured against the Kirk of God.'

Laud and  
Scotland

The  
National  
Covenant  
1638

The Covenanters meant what they said, and their deeds were as earnest as their words. They raised an army and dared the king to invade Scotland. Charles replied by marching north with an ill-equipped host to wage what is called the First Bishops War (1639). But he never entered Scotland, for he soon saw that his men were no match for such an enemy. By the Treaty of Berwick he agreed to let the Scots settle their own affairs. The Covenanters, however, did not disband their army.

First  
Bishops  
War, 1639

<sup>1</sup> The Covenant had originally been drawn up in 1581, during the period of papal aggression.

Wentworth  
recalled

This failure, together with the opposition of the English Puritans, convinced Charles that the situation was growing desperate. He decided to recall Wentworth from Ireland, and from the moment of his return Wentworth took the first place in the king's counsels. The success of his 'Thorough' method in Ireland inclined him to favour a complete despotism. Should such a system be tried in England and Scotland? The answer depended on whether the king could raise enough money to carry on the government, and on whether he could raise an army to enforce his will. Absolutism without an army must fail.

Short  
Parliament  
1640 (Apr.-  
May)

The fateful year 1640 opened. Wentworth was made Earl of Strafford. His haughty manners aroused fierce hatred in England; his known ruthlessness made him as much feared as he was hated. But, contrary to expectation, he advised the king to summon a Parliament. The Short Parliament (April-May 1640) met and was asked to vote money. The members, as usual, demanded redress of grievances before granting supplies, and Charles impatiently dismissed them. He then tried, with Strafford's aid, to carry on as before. But that summer the Scots, suspecting Strafford's intention to treat them as he had treated the Irish, were again in arms. They invaded England before the king could strike, and so came the Second Bishops War (June-October 1640). Again forced by superior numbers to give way, Charles signed the Treaty of Ripon, by which the Scottish army was left on English soil—at his expense.

Second  
Bishops  
War, 1640  
(June-Oct.)

Meeting of  
the Long  
Parliament  
Nov. 1640

Strafford again advised the summoning of Parliament, and indeed there was nothing else to be done. Charles had no money and no army worth the name. He must, if possible, come to terms with his English subjects. So the famous Long Parliament of the Puritan Revolution<sup>1</sup> assembled at Westminster (November 1640). Scarcely had it done so when Strafford, by order of the Lords, was arrested and thrown into prison.

<sup>1</sup> It met on the same day as its revolutionary predecessor—the *Long Parliament of the Reformation* (1529-36)—had met 111 years before.



### 5. *The Long Parliament of the Puritan Revolution*

The meeting of the Long Parliament (as it was afterwards called) in November 1640 ended the great days of the English monarchy. The Commons were determined on reform; they meant to put an end to the king's unconstitutional methods in both Church and State. Charles himself, though he seldom faced facts, saw that some concessions would be necessary. But a real settlement was not achieved, chiefly because tempers were rising and the atmosphere soon became that of a revolution. Charles was partly to blame. He had no real desire for a lasting understanding with Parliament, and his shifty character aroused general distrust. But he found that the more he gave way to Parliament, the more it demanded.

John Pym, a squire of Somerset, was the acknowledged Pym leader of the Commons. His enemies nicknamed him 'King Pym'. He was 'the first great popular organizer', for he used the press, the petition, and even the platform to support his cause. He now led the attack on the chief instruments of the late personal government. The judges who had upheld Charles's financial exactions in the Courts were arrested and imprisoned, and so was Archbishop Laud, who was beheaded in 1645. But the principal victim was Strafford. He was charged with having tried to 'subvert the fundamental laws and government of England and Ireland, and instead thereof to introduce an arbitrary and tyrannical government against law'. In March 1641 he was brought to Westminster Hall to be tried for high treason. But his accusers were at once faced with a difficult point. Strafford may have tried to 'subvert the laws'; but treason meant treason to the king, and had Strafford been a traitor to Charles? It was difficult to prove that he had, and as the trial proceeded it became clear that the verdict would be Not Guilty. But the Puritan majority in the House was determined that Strafford should die. Parliament therefore passed a special Bill of Attainder, condemning the minister to death without trial.

Trial of  
Strafford  
1641

The Lords passed the Bill of Attainder, and it remained for the king to give or to withhold his consent. Some may think that it was Charles's duty to risk his life to defend Strafford. But

Execution  
of Strafford  
1641

the mob raged round Whitehall, howling for blood. Charles feared for the safety of the queen and his children, and he gave way. 'If my own person only were in danger', he told the Council, with tears in his eyes, 'I would gladly venture it to save Lord Strafford's life.' Three days later the earl was led to his execution (May 1641) in the presence of a crowd of 200,000 people who had come to witness the end of 'Black Tom Tyrant'. No man ever died more bravely. 'I thank my God', he said, as he prepared to die, 'I am not afraid of death, but do as cheerfully put off my doublet at this time as ever I did when I went to bed.' The executioner offered to cover his eyes with a handkerchief. 'Thou shalt not bind my eyes,' said Strafford, 'for I will see it done.' And so he placed his head upon the block. His misfortune, wrote Laud, was that 'he served a mild and gracious prince, who knew not how to be, or be made great'.

The Royal  
Tyranny  
destroyed

That summer Parliament was busy passing a number of Acts intended to make absolute government impossible for the future. One Act declared that the present Parliament could not be dissolved without its own consent; another—the Triennial Act—that in future Parliaments should be called every three years. The three Courts by which the king and Laud had carried out their religious and financial measures were abolished—the Star Chamber, the Court of High Commission, and the Council of the North. Finally Ship-Money and other arbitrary forms of taxation were declared illegal. These abolitions of the year 1641 were the permanent, constructive work of the Puritan Revolution; nor were the institutions then destroyed restored with the monarchy in 1660.<sup>1</sup>

The 'Root-  
and-Branch'  
Bill, 1641

Meanwhile another Bill had come up for discussion. A petition was presented to Parliament praying for the ending of episcopacy (i.e. the rule of the Church by bishops) 'in all its roots and branches'. The thorough-going Puritan members considered the petition, and a 'Root-and-Branch' Bill (1641) was prepared, but it fell through. For now a new factor came into play. Hitherto a large majority, both of Lords and Commons, had been united in their opposition to the king. But this Bill divided parliamentarians for the first time. There were

<sup>1</sup> See below, p. 491.

many who began to fear extremes; and a moderate party now sprang up. It was out of this debate on the Root-and-Branch Bill that the germs of the future Roundhead and Cavalier parties were formed. The extremists—the Roundheads—included Pym, Hampden, and Oliver Cromwell. The chief figures on the other side were Lord Falkland and Sir Edward Hyde, afterwards the famous Earl of Clarendon, the future Chancellor and historian.

Parliament adjourned for six months, but met again at the end of October. It had no sooner assembled than terrible news arrived from Ireland. Now that the stern hand of Strafford was withdrawn, the crushed Irish had risen against their lords. There was a sudden and horrible rebellion; thousands of Protestants were massacred in cold blood.<sup>1</sup> When this news was received in London it only served to increase the Puritan fury.

Irish Rebellion, 1641

Meanwhile the Commons drew up a Grand Remonstrance (November 1641), in which they recited the past acts of the king and his servants to which they objected—there were 201 items—and stated a programme for the future. Some of its clauses prayed the king to reduce the power of the bishops and to remove 'oppressions in religion'. Another clause asked His Majesty to employ ministers 'such as the Parliament may have cause to confide in'—which in later times solved the problem of disputes between king and Parliament. All this shows that Parliament had considerably advanced its demands. During the months from November 1640 to September 1641 they had succeeded in placing constitutional checks on the king's power. From November 1641 to August 1642 they were bent on seizing control of both Church and State, until they forced Charles to reply: 'If I granted your demands, I should be no more than the mere phantom of a king.' The Grand Remonstrance was passed by a majority of only eleven—a fact which illustrates the growth of the anti-Puritan party.

Grand Remonstrance Nov. 1641

The situation, at the end of 1641, was dangerous in the extreme. On the one hand the queen and the swaggering 'Cavaliers' of the Court were urging Charles to strike at King Pym and his fellow leaders before it was too late. On the other hand, London was a stronghold of Puritanism, and it was the

<sup>1</sup> See below, Chapter XXIII.

London merchants who had felt the weight of Charles's taxation most heavily. The London 'prentices' and the king's swordsmen were itching to get at one another's throats. Nevertheless Pym proceeded steadily on his way. He was determined to deprive the king of the command of the militia; for it was obvious that if the Irish rebellion was to be crushed the militia must be called out. And once Charles had command of the national armed forces, would he not use them to crush Parliament and destroy English liberty for ever? Pym had no doubt that he would. A Militia Bill was therefore brought in, and—contrary to all English law and custom—it took the command of the military forces out of the king's hands. To this Charles of course refused his consent.

Militia Bill

The Five  
Members  
Jan. 1642

Early in January 1642 he took the queen's advice, and instructed the Attorney-General to impeach Pym, Hampden, and three other leading members of the Commons. The members were alarmed, but Charles promised them 'on the word of a king' that no violence should be done them. The next day (4 January 1642) he went down to the House with 400 swordsmen. He left his guard at the door, and walked in accompanied only by Prince Rupert, his German nephew. But the five members, warned of his intention, had fled by river. There was a dead silence as the king looked round. He asked the Speaker, Lenthall, where the missing members were. 'I have neither eyes to see', Lenthall replied, 'nor tongue to speak in this place, but as this House shall direct me.' There was another pause as Charles scanned the benches. 'I see', he said at last, 'all the birds are flown. I do expect you will send them to me as soon as they shall return hither.' Then, amid cries of 'Privilege, privilege', he walked out.

Charles  
leaves  
London  
1642

By this revolutionary act the king had outlawed himself. All hope of reconciliation being now past, he determined to try the issue of war. He left his capital (10 January), sent the queen out of the country, and took up his quarters at York. Parliament claimed the control of the militia and secured the command of the fleet. During the spring and summer of 1642 both sides were busy raising troops. The great strength of the Puritan cause was London. The city contained a tenth of the population of England—500,000 out of five million. The

number of troops which London provided was more than sufficient to quell any Royalist opposition in the surrounding country. The London 'train-bands'<sup>1</sup> therefore protected the Puritan leaders during the eight months that the king was gathering his army in the north (January–August 1642).

<sup>1</sup> i.e. trained companies of citizen soldiers.



CHARLES I'S ATTEMPTED ARREST OF THE FIVE MEMBERS

From a contemporary engraving

## DATE SUMMARY: STUART PERIOD I (1603-42)

### BRITAIN AND IRELAND

### EUROPE, ASIA, AND AMERICA

#### JAMES I (1603-25)

1604 Hampton Court Conference  
1605 Gunpowder Plot

1607 VIRGINIA  
1608 Quebec (French)  
1609 Hudson River (Dutch)  
1610 Newfoundland  
Hudson's Bay

1611 Ulster Settlement  
Authorized Version of Bible  
1612 Robert Cecil, Lord Salisbury *d.*  
1614 Addled Parliament  
1618 Raleigh executed

1618 Thirty Years' War begins  
1619 Virginia Assembly  
1620 PILGRIM FATHERS

1621 Bacon impeached

1623 Amboyna Massacre

#### CHARLES I (1625-49)

1625-9 First Three Parliaments  
1628 Petition of Right  
1629-40 'Personal' Government  
1632-9 Wentworth in Ireland  
1633 Laud Archbishop

627 Barbados  
1628 Massachusetts Bay Company

1638 Hampden (Ship Money)  
1639 First Bishops' War  
1640 Short Parliament

1633 British on R. Hooghly  
1634 Maryland

1639 Madras

LONG PARLIAMENT meets  
1641 Strafford executed  
Grand Remonstrance  
Irish Rebellion  
1642 Civil War begins

## XX

### THE CIVIL WAR AND THE REPUBLIC

#### 1. *The Defeat of the King*

It was in a stern and sad mood that the leaders of England drew their swords against each other in the late summer of 1642. A few there were, like the dashing courtiers of Whitehall, who were eager for the fight. But for the most part men went into the great struggle in the spirit of the Puritan gentleman who wrote to his friend—a Royalist—in these words: 'The great God, who is the searcher of my heart, knows with what reluctance I go upon this service, and with what perfect hatred I look upon war without an enemy. We are both on the stage, and we must act the parts assigned to us in this tragedy; let us do it in a way of honour, without personal animosities.'

The Civil War

A spirit of loyalty to the king caused many to side with him when it came to actual war. 'I have eaten the king's bread and served him over thirty years', said Sir Edmund Verney, 'and I will not do so base a thing as to forsake him.' A third of the House of Commons, and three-quarters of the Lords sided with Charles. But many, on both sides, were half-hearted, and feared the issue of the war, whatever it might be. Lord Saville expressed this feeling when he said: 'I would not have the king trample on the Parliament, nor the Parliament lessen him so much as to make a way for the people to rule us all.'

Spirit of the combatants

Parliament drew its main strength from the wealthy and better educated areas north and south of London, from East Anglia, the Midlands, and the West Riding of Yorkshire, from the then small manufacturing towns, like Birmingham, Manchester, and Colchester, from the seaports (e.g. Hull and Portsmouth) and, above all, from London itself. In contrast with this somewhat solid block of territory, the king had on his side the three more isolated and backward regions of the north, the west, and Cornwall. But while this local distribution of the parties changed with the fortunes of war, the class distribution changed less. While Parliament relied mainly on the middle

The class—the smaller gentry, the yeomanry, and the tradesmen—the king depended mostly on the nobility and their dependants together with the higher gentry, men all used to riding and hunting and other country sports. The fighting was seldom brutal; it was remarkably free from such hideous deeds of massacre as had been witnessed in the Wars of Religion in France, and such as were still taking place in Germany.

Next to the support of London, Parliament's most important asset was the Navy, which deserted the king—a fact which made it almost impossible for him to get help from abroad. The towns and the trading classes, too, were mainly on the side of his enemies, for they had suffered most from Charles's arbitrary taxation. Their attitude made it difficult for Charles to get money and munitions to carry on the war. But the colleges at Oxford and a few at Cambridge melted down their valuable plate for him, as did many an old county family.

The numbers engaged in the war were not large; the bulk of the population took no part in it. The men were recruited by local gentry who were empowered, by king or Parliament, to raise regiments of foot or troops of horse. The foot soldiers were divided into pikemen and musketeers.<sup>1</sup> The pikemen carried a sword and a sixteen-foot pike. The musketeers also carried a sword, besides the clumsy weapon from which, with a great deal of trouble, they managed to fire a few bullets. It took a long time to load and fire a musket, the powder having to be poured down the muzzle first. The rank and file had no experience of war, but many of the officers on both sides had served in the armies of Holland or Sweden in the Thirty Years' War.

Charles made his nephew, Prince Rupert (son of the Elector Palatine), general of the Royalist Horse. Rupert was a dashing young man, but very inexperienced for such a command; he was only twenty-three. 'He should have someone to advise him,' wrote the queen, 'for, believe me, he is yet very young and self-willed.' The general of the Parliamentary army was the Earl of Essex, son of Elizabeth's favourite, and the only man capable of holding the Puritan forces together. The king

<sup>1</sup> The bayonet had not yet been invented, so the pikemen and musketeers had not yet been amalgamated into one. (See p. 488).



himself commanded the Royalist army, but he was as poor a general as he was a ruler. His weak and irresolute character did not inspire confidence, and this was obvious even to the queen, who wrote to him: 'Take a good resolution and pursue it. To begin and then to stop is your ruin—experience shows it you.'

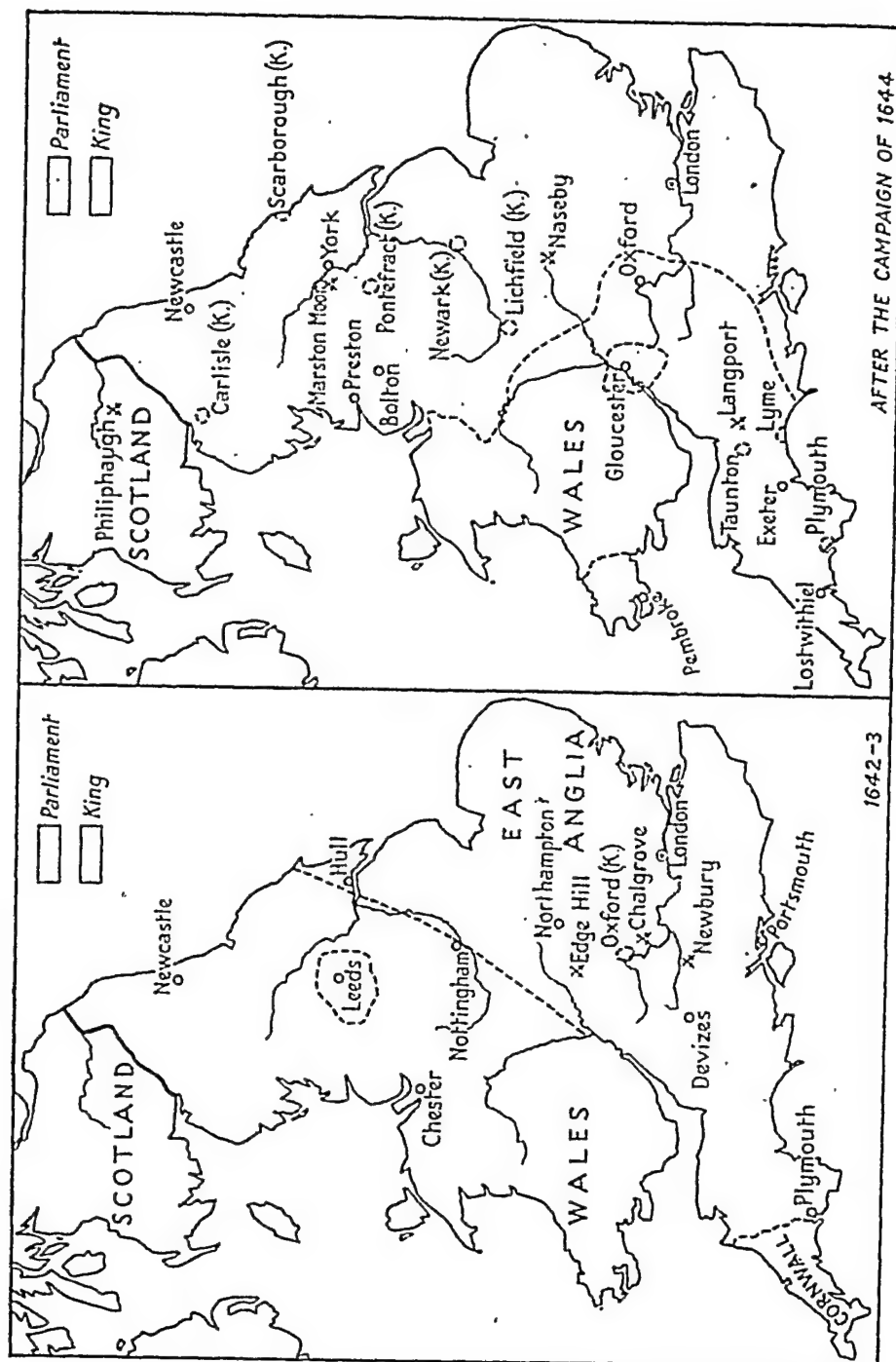
Charles raised the royal standard at Nottingham on 22 August 1642, the anniversary of Bosworth Field; but the standard was blown down the same night—an evil omen for the king. Essex, with 20,000 men, was at Northampton, guarding the road to London. Charles moved his army westwards, with the object of recruiting more men before marching on London. Essex marched parallel to the king and reached the Severn at Worcester. But when, at Shrewsbury, the king turned and began his march on London, Essex also turned south-east and intercepted the king at Edgehill, fifteen miles south of Warwick. Beneath the wooded slopes of the hill the first battle of the Civil War was fought (August 1642). Prince Rupert routed the Puritan horse, but, as on later occasions, he pursued too far, and so lost his advantage. The battle was therefore indecisive, and Charles was able to continue his march on the capital. He actually reached the outskirts at Turnham Green, but the London train-bands at this critical moment turned out in force to oppose him. He therefore retired to Oxford, which he made his head-quarters for the next three years. He thus lost the best chance he ever had of concluding the war at a blow, and he never got so near London again with his army.

Battle of  
Edgehill  
1642

In 1643 the Royalists planned a threefold attack on London from the north, the west, and from Oxford; but, largely owing to the resistance of certain towns, the attacking lines were held up. The Earl of Newcastle overran most of the north for the king, and shut up old Lord Fairfax and his son Sir Thomas in Hull. He then advanced into Lincolnshire, where he received a check. The Puritan armies of East Anglia had been organized into the 'Eastern Association', which was kept together by the genius of a Huntingdon squire. This was Oliver Cromwell, who was the only great military leader produced by this war, with the exception of Prince Rupert. Born and bred in the country,

The  
campaign  
of  
1643

Oliver  
Cromwell



ENGLAND AND WALES  
Civil War

Cromwell had a countryman's knowledge of men and horses; and these gifts, combined with his own peculiar energy and earnestness, helped to make him the chosen leader of the East Anglian Puritans. His famous troopers were all sternly disciplined; no gambling and swearing, no drunkenness and no plundering were allowed among this unusual army. Newcastle found he could not advance far against Cromwell's troops, so he turned back into Yorkshire to besiege Hull. But the Puritan Roundheads followed him, and Hull was relieved.

A similar campaign took place at the same time in the west of England. Sir Ralph Hopton, the Royalist general, led the men of Cornwall and Devon towards London, but the farthest point eastward which they reached was Roundway Down, outside Devizes. The western troops decided to return home, for Plymouth, supplied by sea, still held out behind them. Hull and Plymouth

In central England there were several Cavalier raids from Oxford, and in a skirmish at Chalgrove Field, near Thame, John Hampden, the Puritan leader, was mortally wounded. The advance of the king's main army was, however, held up by the resistance of Gloucester, and Charles therefore began the siege of this town. Essex marched from London to its relief, and having succeeded in his task, raced back to the capital across the Berkshire Downs. Charles, also coming from Gloucester by another route, blocked his way at Newbury. But Essex cut his way through and reached London. Siege of Gloucester  
At Newbury fell the noble Lord Falkland, who so hated to shed the blood of his countrymen that he rode into the battle with sword sheathed. A Puritan bullet ended the career of 'that incomparable young man', as he was called by his friend, the statesman and historian, Lord Clarendon. 'Whosoever leads such a life needs not care upon how short warning it be taken from him.'<sup>1</sup> Battle of Newbury 1643

The end of the year 1643 seemed to promise well for the Royalists. True, they had not taken London, neither had Hull, Gloucester, nor Plymouth fallen. But apart from this they now held most of England except East Anglia and the Home Counties round London. It was then that Pym played his last card for the Puritan cause. He made a treaty with the Scottish

<sup>1</sup> Clarendon, *History of the Great Rebellion*.

Solemn  
League and  
Covenant  
Sept. 1643

Covenanters, by which the Scots promised to send an army of 20,000 men to fight against the king. In return for this help Parliament had to accept the Solemn League and Covenant, by which it was agreed that a Presbyterian Church should be set up in England. Three months later Pym died.

Battle of  
Marston  
Moor, 1644

In January 1644 the Scottish army invaded England and laid siege to York, where a Roundhead army, under the Earl of Manchester, soon joined them. In the summer Prince Rupert rode north to the rescue, taking a route through Lancashire. His Cavaliers massacred the defenders of Bolton and sacked the town, this being one of the worst episodes of the Civil War. He then relieved York. Eight miles from the city he came upon the Scottish-Roundhead army on Marston Moor (July 1644). It was already evening when the Puritan army charged down on the Royalists. Cromwell's well-trained East Anglians were worthy of their leader; his 'men of religion' were now a match for the 'men of honour' whom Rupert led. The Prince's famous horsemen were put to flight; 'the Lord made them as stubble to our swords', wrote Cromwell. When he had scattered the Royalist horse Cromwell turned and came to the relief of the Scottish pikemen in the centre, who were fighting the 'Whitecoats' of the Marquis of Newcastle. Cromwell attacked on the flank; the Whitecoats were all massacred.<sup>1</sup> As the sun sank behind the Moor the last of the Royalists fled, and the battle was won. After this York surrendered, and the north of England was lost to Charles. It was then that Rupert bestowed on his conqueror the nickname of 'Ironsides', a name which was afterwards applied to the Puritan soldiers as well as to their general.

Elsewhere the king's prospects were brighter. In Scotland the Marquis of Montrose raised a force of Highlanders to fight for the Royalist cause. In England a Royalist force, led by the king in person, surrounded and routed an army under Essex at Lostwithiel in Cornwall. Essex managed to escape by sea, but most of his army surrendered.

Essex was discredited after this adventure; Manchester, who commanded the Parliamentary forces, had shown himself half-hearted; Hampden and Pym were dead; it became

<sup>1</sup> Newcastle left England after this. For his titles, see Index.

obvious that a change of command was necessary. Parliament then agreed to pass the Self-Denying Ordinance (December 1644) by virtue of which all members of Parliament had to lay down their military commands. But the Roundheads wanted Cromwell, and after an interval of forty days he was appointed Lieutenant-General of Horse. The chief command was given to Sir Thomas Fairfax, who was not a member of Parliament, and who had already distinguished himself in the fighting in his native Yorkshire, and Cromwell was second in command.

The Self-Denying Ordinance  
1644

Fairfax and Cromwell now set about re-organizing their army on the lines of Cromwell's Eastern Association. The New Model Army, as it was called, was trained during the winter of 1644-5, and formed the backbone of the Parliamentary forces; it at first numbered about 22,000 and reached a total of 80,000 in 1645. Though some of the men were pressed soldiers, many also belonged to all sorts of fanatical religious sects;<sup>1</sup> but Cromwell told Parliament that he wanted good soldiers, not sound Presbyterians. Parliament also promised to pay the New Model regularly, and to give the generals complete control of its training. Thus a regular army was formed to fight for Parliament, and when it came into action the issue was not long in doubt.

The New Model

The New Model was ready to do its work by the summer of 1645. The king's chief army was in Northamptonshire. Here, at Naseby, Fairfax and Cromwell sought him out and gave battle (June 1645) lest he should attack the Scottish army and join forces with Montrose. Cromwell was confident of victory: 'I could not', he wrote in a letter, 'but smile out to God in praises, in assurance of victory, because God would, by things that are not, bring to naught things that are. Of which I had great assurance, and God did it.' The result justified his hopes, for the Royalists were completely routed. There was one more Royalist army left, under Goring, in Somerset. But Fairfax went down to the west and put it to flight at Langport (July 1645). Meanwhile Montrose, who had had some successes in Scotland during the previous year, was decisively defeated by the Covenanters at Philiphaugh, near Selkirk (September 1645). In the campaign of 1644 (Marston Moor) Charles had lost

Battle of Naseby  
1645

<sup>1</sup> See next section.

the north; in 1645 (Naseby) he had lost the Midlands. The king had no more armies left to fight for him. The war became a series of sieges of towns and manor-houses. This stage of the struggle lasted about a year, and it was over when Oxford surrendered (June 1646). A month before Oxford fell Charles had fled from the faithful city, and had surrendered at Newark to the Scots, who handed him over to Parliament a few months later in return for £400,000 (to cover their expenses) and then went home. Thus the First Civil War (1642-6) ended, both in England and Scotland, in a complete victory for the Parliamentary forces.

Fall of  
Oxford  
1646

End  
of the  
War

## 2. *Parliament, Army, and King*<sup>1</sup>

Victory The war was over, and Parliament had won. What would they do with their victory? On the answer to this question the future of England depended; for a harsh use of victory would be sure to stir up trouble for the future. Unfortunately the Parliament men were no wiser than most others when, in their hour of triumph, they proceeded to deal with their beaten enemies. The Prayer Book service was forbidden by law, and 2,000 Anglican clergy were expelled from their livings. Having got rid of Laud, who had been put to death the year before, and, as they hoped, destroyed his Church system, Parliament turned to the Cavalier landlords. All who had fought for or helped the king were forced to pay huge fines varying from a sixth to a half of their estates. This crushing blow embittered the Royalist squires beyond hope of reconciliation. The work of this year (1646) laid the foundation of that alliance between Cavalier squire and Anglican parson which was to last for centuries. And when the Royalists returned to power under Charles II they treated the Puritans no less harshly than the Puritans had treated them.

Crushing  
of the  
Royalists

<sup>1</sup> This complex period may be summarized thus:

1. 1646. Parliament supreme. Intolerant acts against (a) Cavaliers, (b) Independents.
2. 1647. The Army in London. Negotiations with the king (Heads of Proposals).
3. 1648. Second Civil War. Ironsides *v.* Presbyterians, Scots, and Royalists. Cromwell's victory (Preston).
4. 1649. Trial and execution of the king.

The Puritans, however, were by no means united. At Westminster there was a Presbyterian majority, and, in accordance with their promise to the Scots, they set up a Presbyterian church system by Act of Parliament. But outside Parliament, especially in the New Model army, there were many Puritan sects other than Presbyterian. Some of these sects dated from Elizabeth's day,<sup>1</sup> but of late years, especially during the war, their numbers had greatly increased. The most important were the Independents and the Baptists. The Independents believed that every congregation of Christian men, even if limited to one village, should rule itself. Such freedom did not suit the Presbyterians, who were just as rigid and narrow in their views as Laud had been in his. They insisted, just as he had done, on having one uniform type of religion in England. So they passed Bills through Parliament to suppress all other sects (1646). It would have been well for them had they listened to some wise words that John Milton had recently written: 'A little generous prudence, a little forbearance of one another, and some grain of charity, might win all . . . into one brotherly search after truth.'

The Independents

Milton

Not content with persecuting the Independent soldiers, Parliament basely decided to dismiss the New Model without its promised arrears of pay. The soldiers refused to be disbanded in this unfair way and remained in camp, ready to mutiny. The Parliamentary leaders were then foolish enough to think they could raise enough troops, apart from the New Model, to coerce the rebels in that force. Charles had been confined at Holmby House, in Lincolnshire, after the Scots had handed him over to Parliament. They now decided to bring him to London and act in his name. But Cromwell, knowing their intention, forestalled them and sent Cornet Joyce with 500 men to Holmby to seize the king, and so prevent his joining the Presbyterian government—which he might have done. 'Where is your warrant?' asked the king, when Joyce appeared to take him away. 'Here,' replied Joyce, pointing to his men. 'It is as fair a commission', replied Charles, 'and as well written, as I have seen in my life.' They brought him to Hampton Court, where Fairfax and Cromwell had already

Parliament versus Army

Cornet Joyce, 1647

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter XVII, Sect. 7.

taken up their quarters (May 1647). Shortly after this the army marched into London, and compelled eleven leading members of Parliament to retire. After this ominous display of their power they withdrew to Bedford.

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That summer Cromwell and his son-in-law, Ireton, placed a treaty before the king called the 'Hheads of the Proposals',

By this treaty Charles was to be restored to the head of the government, and there was to be freedom of worship for all the sects—but not for the Anglicans or the Roman Catholics.

Charles pretended to consider the scheme for a while. Then, in November, he suddenly escaped from Hampton Court and fled to Carisbrooke Castle, in the Isle of Wight, where he was made a prisoner. Charles once more determined to put his fate to the hazard of war, and now, in the spring of 1647, he spent his

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time in prison in secretly arranging an alliance between the Scots, the English Presbyterians, and the remaining Royalists.

The Scots were by now prepared to support the king against the army, owing to the failure of their scheme for enforcing Presbyterianism in England, which the army had opposed and prevented. The Scots agreed to invade England once more and help Parliament to destroy Cromwell and the New Model. It was a dangerous game that Charles was playing, for if the Scots failed him he need expect no mercy from the Ironsides. The various negotiations of 1646–8 had failed, and when Cromwell met the army chiefs at Windsor the blame for the renewal of war was laid upon the king, and the soldiers resolved, 'if ever the Lord should bring them back again in peace, to call Charles Stuart, that man of blood, to an account for the blood he had shed'.

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In this spirit the Second Civil War now began. While Fairfax besieged and captured the Presbyterian town of Colchester, Cromwell marched north to meet the Scots, put their horsemen to flight in a running fight near Preston (August 1648) and captured all their infantry. A far more bitter spirit had by this time crept into the struggle. Both Cromwell's captives in Lancashire and the defenders of Colchester were shipped off in batches to Barbados.

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After Cromwell's victory the Ironsides were masters of the situation, and there was no more fighting. On returning to



London he at once turned on the Presbyterians, who had lately been so powerful in Parliament. In December he sent Colonel Pride and his musketeers to the door of the House of Commons to prevent 100 Presbyterian members from entering, and to carry off 50 more to prison, and this the soldiers did. After Pride's Purge, as it was called, less than 100 members, all Independents, remained to form the 'Rump' of what had been the Commons of the Long Parliament. The sword had conquered.

Pride's  
Purge, 1648

One thing now remained to be done, and that was to settle accounts with the king. Cromwell had decided on his death. It was Charles, he considered, who was responsible for bringing so much bloodshed on England. If the king could be forgiven for his part in the First Civil War, he certainly could not be forgiven for causing the outbreak of the Second. And as long as Charles remained alive, Cromwell thought, and no doubt rightly thought, he would never cease to plot with Scots or Irish or French. It was useless to rely on his word, for it could not be trusted.

It was decided to put Charles through a form of trial. The Commons passed a Bill saying that it was treason for the king to levy war upon his Parliament. The Lords, of whom there were now only about a dozen left, threw out the Bill; whereupon the Commons, resolving that 'the people are, under God, the original of all just power', proceeded to act on their own authority. The next day they passed an Act (as they called it) setting up a Commission of 135 members to try the king, and declaring that Charles had endeavoured to 'subvert the ancient and fundamental laws and liberties of this nation, and in their place to introduce an arbitrary and tyrannical government',<sup>1</sup> and that he had pursued this aim 'with fire and sword' and by 'a cruel war'.

The actual trial, at which John Bradshaw, a Puritan lawyer, presided, was a tragic farce. The charge of treason could not, of course, legally be brought against the king. But Charles questioned the legality of the court in vain, and in vain protested his innocence of any 'crime' against his people. Bradshaw bullied the unfortunate monarch in the most outrageous

Trial of  
Charles I

<sup>1</sup> Compare the charge against Strafford, p. 455.

manner, and finally refused to allow him to speak. He was found guilty and sentenced to death, and he was executed in front of his own palace at Whitehall (30 January 1649).

Execution  
of Charles I  
1649

Charles went nobly to his death. In Andrew Marvell's words,

He nothing common did or mean  
Upon that memorable scene,

and his proud and fearless bearing made a great impression on the multitude. A dreadful groan burst from them as the bleeding head was held up. In succeeding ages pity for Charles's fate has often obscured all other feelings. Yet if Charles had much to forgive there is also much for which he stands in need of forgiveness. It was, indeed, a hard fate which had called Charles Stuart to the throne of England at a time when England needed a wise and strong man to rule over her.

### 3. *The Commonwealth*

#### (i) *The Royalist and Dutch Wars.*

The new government, which was set up in 1649, consisted of a Council of State and the Parliament. It was just over eight years since the Long Parliament had met, but the 'Rump' that was now left of it numbered only about 56 members. The Cavalier members did not sit; the Presbyterians had been expelled by Pride's Purge. In 1649 (February) the House of Lords was declared to be 'useless and dangerous' and was abolished.

The Rump  
and the  
Council

The new Council of State contained 41 members, of whom at least 30 were members of Parliament. These 30 men, since they were in a majority in both Council and Parliament, controlled the government, and they clung to power for four years. But they did not perceive that the Army was the real master of the situation. Meanwhile Fairfax, who disapproved of the execution of Charles, retired into private life. Cromwell led his men to further victories.

Disruption  
of the  
Empire

The Roundhead victory in 1648, followed by the killing of the king, had caused a revulsion of feeling against the Puritans. It had also caused a disruption of the infant British Empire. Scotland refused to recognize the new régime, and prepared to welcome Charles II from Holland; the Earl of Ormonde

held Ireland in the name of the same prince. Rupert, with a Royalist fleet, including some revolted ships of the Navy, held the Channel and Scilly Isles and threatened the English coasts. Across the Atlantic, Virginia had declared for King Charles, an example which was followed by several West Indian islands.<sup>1</sup>

Cromwell now had all these problems to deal with, and he began with Ireland. He landed at Dublin (August 1649), and remained in the country about nine months during which he stormed Drogheda and Wexford, and terrorized the whole population. Cromwell's conquest of Ireland was the most complete and thorough of the English conquests of that unfortunate country. His callous and inhuman dealings with the Irish Catholics are described in another chapter.<sup>2</sup> He was, however, no worse than his contemporaries, and no worse than the Elizabethans: that is the only excuse that can be made for him.

Cromwell  
in Ireland  
1649-50

Having, as he distinctly stated, performed 'God's work' in crushing 'these barbarous wretches', Cromwell left Ireland amid the curses of a whole people (May 1650). In the same month the young Charles II, then aged twenty, landed in Scotland, and was welcomed in the land of his fathers. He swore to accept the National Covenant, and was crowned king at Scone. But in accepting the help of the Covenanters Charles had to agree to throw over Montrose and his Highlanders, who were mostly Catholics. Montrose was captured by his enemies, the Covenanters, and hanged at Edinburgh. Betrayed by the cause he had fought for, and insulted to the last by his foes,<sup>3</sup> Montrose died like the gallant hero he was.

Charles II  
in Scotland

Meanwhile Cromwell set out for the north. By September his army was half starving, and it might have fared ill with the Ironsides but for the rashness of David Leslie, the Scottish general. Cromwell's army lay at Dunbar, while Leslie occupied a good position on the hills above. But in the early morning of 3 September 1650, Leslie foolishly descended to the level

<sup>1</sup> For the early British Empire, see Chapter XXII.

<sup>2</sup> Chapter XXIII, Ireland.

<sup>3</sup> 'The insults with which they pursued their noble victim to the last, stand in odious contrast to the conduct of those who beheaded Strafford.' (Trevelyan, *England under the Stuarts*.)

Battle of Dunbar  
3 Sept.  
1650 ground, and the Ironsides attacked him before he could get his men into proper order. 'Let God arise and let His enemies be scattered', was Cromwell's watchword, as the sun rose above the morning mists, 'Like as the mist vanisheth, so shalt Thou drive them away.' The Scottish horse was broken first, and then the infantry which tried to come to its rescue. Ten thousand prisoners were taken, and next day Edinburgh was occupied. Leslie escaped without an army.

Battle of Worcester  
3 Sept.  
1651 The following year the Scots raised another army, and decided to invade England while the Ironsides were still in possession of Scotland. There was a race down England as Cromwell followed them southwards. The two armies met in the streets of Worcester on the anniversary of Dunbar (3 September 1651), and Cromwell was again completely victorious. Few Scots escaped the slaughter of that day and the man-hunt which followed it. Among the survivors was Prince Charles, who, after being secretly sheltered by various Cavalier families, mostly Catholic, at last managed, after many hair-breadth escapes, to reach Brighton and sail for France. There were a few more Royalist risings, but none on so large a scale. Scotland was conquered, and for the next nine years it was governed by General Monk.

Worcester was Cromwell's 'crowning mercy'. But the triumph of the Ironsides would have been incomplete without the work of the Navy. The Royalist fleet was still at large, preying upon English shipping, while French privateers attacked our sailors in the Channel. The republican government had not a friend in Europe, and, unless it asserted itself, it must soon collapse. The Puritan leaders realized that the very existence of the new State depended upon a strong Navy. They acted with resolution, and put the affairs of the Navy in the hands of a committee under the able Sir Henry Vane. In two years (1649-51) the Navy was doubled in size—an increase of 40 to 80 ships; and during the eleven years of the Republic 207 new ships were built or acquired.

The  
Republican  
Navy The command of the republican fleet was given to Robert Blake—a fortunate choice. Blake was the only leader of the time whose genius compared with Cromwell's. He was a native of Bridgwater in Somerset; he had spent ten years of his youth

at Oxford, and then turned to the family business, which gave him some valuable experience of shipping. The Civil War found him, at forty-three (he was the same age as Cromwell), on the Parliamentary side. He distinguished himself by the stubborn defence of Taunton. But his wonderful energy and powers of organization were only shown when he undertook the task of re-uniting the Empire under the republican flag.

Blake's chief enemy was Prince Rupert, who, like himself, had turned from land to sea warfare. Blake blockaded Rupert in his Irish base, Kinsale, and cleared the English and Irish Channels of Royalist ships. He followed Rupert to Portugal, and forced the king to dismiss his royal visitor. The Royalist fleet then entered the Mediterranean, and sheltered in Cartagena harbour. When the fleet left Cartagena, Blake fell upon it and drove most of the ships on the rocks (1651). For another year Rupert, with his remaining ships, lingered in Spanish and Portuguese waters. Then he sailed to the West Indies, but there lost all his ships except one. After that he gave up the struggle. Blake meanwhile had rounded off his victories by capturing the Channel Islands and the Scillies. One of his captains, Sir George Ayscue, secured the submission of the English West Indies and of Virginia (1652). The republican Navy was thus victorious on all the seas on which it had sailed—the Channel, the Mediterranean, and the Atlantic (1649–52). It was a great and perhaps unexpected triumph.

Defeat of  
Rupert's  
Fleet  
(1649–52)

Eighty years had passed since Holland under William the Silent had revolted against Spain, which formally acknowledged the independence of the Dutch Republic in 1648. During that time the Dutch had made amazing progress, and, together with the English, had wrested the command of the sea from Spain. They had captured various Portuguese trading-stations in the East Indies, including the Spice Islands which they still hold; and they had formed a settlement at the Cape of Good Hope guarding the route to the East. It was in the East that they first came into collision with English traders, whom they treated with contempt and cruelty. A number of our traders were massacred at Amboyna<sup>1</sup> (1623) and the English were driven from the East Indian islands though not from India

Dutch  
Naval  
supremacy

<sup>1</sup> See below, p. 516.

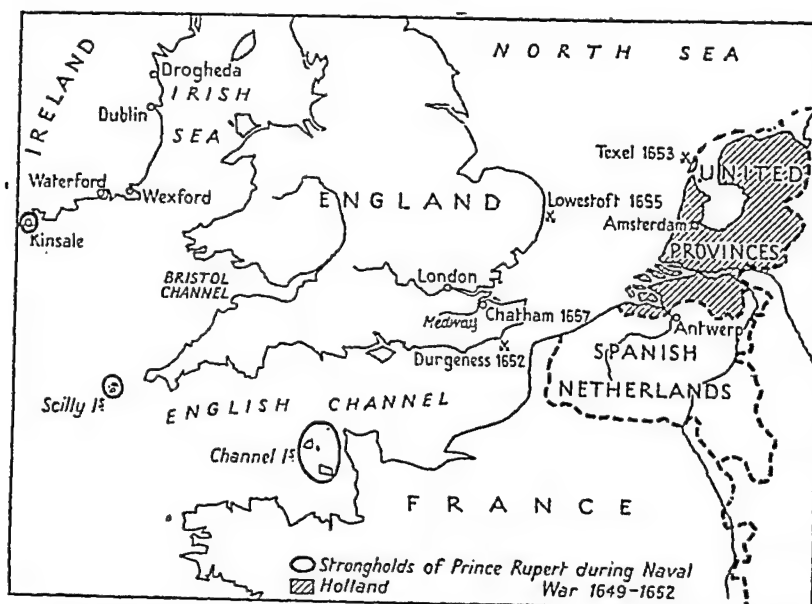
itself. Year by year the fleets of the Dutch East India Company brought back rich cargoes to Amsterdam, rivalling those which sailed to Cadiz and Palos from the Spanish Main.

Anglo-Dutch rivalry Their victory over their rivals, together with their great prosperity, caused the Dutch to regard themselves as masters of the seas. In the North Sea they fought the English sailors, and drove them from the fisheries. The Commonwealth Parliament insisted that this treatment should cease, and they added the somewhat insolent demand that the Dutch should salute the English flag in the Narrow Seas, which they called 'English waters'. English feeling was further outraged when our ambassador at The Hague was murdered in his hotel. Another cause of friction was that English sailors, who were at this time fighting the French privateers in the Channel, demanded the right to search neutral vessels which might be carrying goods to France. Acting on this excuse, our sailors, who hated all Dutchmen, stopped and searched as many Dutch ships as they could.

Navigation Act, 1651 While all this was proceeding Parliament passed a Navigation Act (1651), as previous Parliaments from the days of Richard II had done. This Act laid down that goods imported from America, Asia, and Africa into England, Ireland, or the Colonies must be carried in ships owned by Englishmen and manned by crews more than half English, and that goods imported from Europe must be carried in English ships or in the ships of the country from which the goods came. The Dutch merchants, who at that time carried a large proportion of the goods imported into England, protested at this blow to their trade, and negotiations between the two countries were opened. But before any agreement could be reached fighting broke out between the rival sailors. Blake met a Dutch fleet under Tromp off the coast of Kent, shots were exchanged, and the war began.

'The English are about to attack a mountain of gold; we a mountain of iron', remarked one of the Dutch envoys. There was much truth in this: the Dutch had everything to lose, England little. Holland was a rich, thickly populated country, and the very existence of her teeming cities depended on the maintenance of her sea-borne trade. England, on the other hand, was still an agricultural country, and so could not be

starved into submission. Besides this the Dutch suffered from the great disadvantage that their trading fleet must either pass through the English Channel or go round the British Isles and across the North Sea. In either case the fleet, unless heavily protected, must fall a prey to the English.



NAVAL WARS (1649-1667)

In actual fighting-power there was not much to choose between the two navies. The English attacked the Dutch merchant fleets, and the Dutch admirals—Tromp, de Witt, and de Ruyter—therefore used their warships as convoys for their merchantmen. Tromp defeated Blake off Dungeness (1652) and successfully convoyed a great fleet of 450 merchantmen down the Channel. But next summer the two fighting fleets met off the coast of Suffolk, and this time Blake gained the victory. The Dutch retired to their ports, and a blockade of their coast followed. There was one more naval battle, off Texel, in which Tromp was killed and both fleets suffered severely. But by now (1653) the Dutch cities were starving, and their government ready to come to terms. Peace was made in

First Dutch War 1652-4

the following year (1654). The Dutch conceded our supremacy on the Narrow Seas, and withdrew their objections to the Navigation Act.

The war, however, had been very costly, although the English had captured 1,500 prizes, double the number of our existing merchant fleet. But the cost of the Navy during the war was £1,000,000 a year—more than the total revenue of Charles I. The money was raised largely from heavy taxation of Cavalier estates and from the sale of land formerly belonging to the bishops.

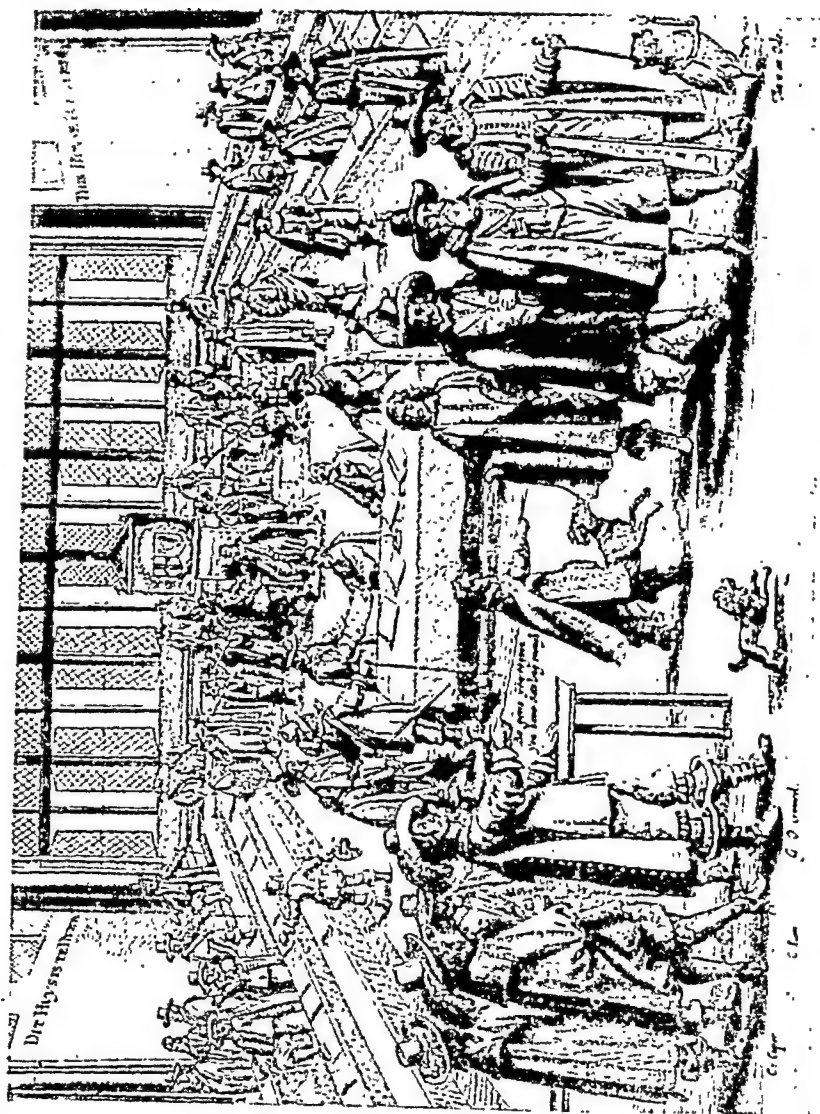
(ii) *The End of the Rump.*

Before the Dutch war was over a change took place in the government of England. The Army had demanded the dismissal of the Rump and the election of a new Parliament. But early in 1653 the Rump made an effort to prolong its power, by bringing in a Bill which provided that no one should be allowed to sit in the next Parliament unless approved by the members of the Rump. Cromwell held a conference with Sir Henry Vane and other leading members; they promised him not to proceed with the Bill until they had discussed it with him again. But next morning he heard that they were pushing the Bill through the House. This breach of faith roused Cromwell; he called for some musketeers and marched down to the House. Eleven years before King Charles had gone to Westminster on a similar errand—but with a different result.

Cromwell sat down in his place and listened to the debate. At last, as the question 'that this Bill do pass' was put, he rose and addressed the House. 'Your hour is come,' he told the members, 'the Lord hath done with you.' Shouts of protest were raised, but the general strode into the middle of the House crying: 'I will put an end to your prating. You should give place to better men. You are no Parliament.' He then signed to his soldiers, who entered and cleared the House. Cromwell lifted the Mace from the table. 'What shall we do with this bauble?' he cried; 'take it away!' Next day some one posted a placard on the locked door of the House: 'This House is to be let, but unfurnished!'

It was an unhappy business, and Cromwell felt it to be so.





**THE END OF THE RUMP**  
Cromwell drives out the members: 'Be gone you rogues, you have sate long enough.' (From a contemporary Dutch cartoon.)

'I have sought the Lord day and night that He would rather slay me than put upon me the doing of this work. But [he told the members] it is you who have forced me to this.' There was much truth in his plea. They had been far too anxious to cling to power, and far too unscrupulous in their methods of retaining it. There was no protest against their expulsion—'not a dog barked', said Cromwell. But it was a poor prospect for a free government—a Commonwealth—when force alone could decide the issue.

A nominated Parliament took the place of the Rump. Those who sat in it were chosen entirely from the Puritan sects—men 'faithful, fearing God, and hating covetousness'. Cromwell and the Council carefully selected the names. At first the Lord General was enthusiastic about the new Parliament, and thought that the Rule of the Saints had come at last. But this Barebones Parliament—as it was called from the name of one of its members, Praise-God Barebone—disappointed him. Various revolutionary schemes, such as the abolition of Church tithes, were proposed. Cromwell, who was at heart a conservative, grew alarmed. 'Nothing was in the hearts of these men', he remarked, 'but overturn, overturn.' But the more moderate members insisted on bringing the Parliament to an end, and carried a vote 'that it is requisite to deliver up to the Lord General the powers we received from him' (December 1653).

The Army officers now decided to make a new scheme of government. They drew up the 'Instrument of Government', which set up a new monarchy, with Cromwell as monarch. He was to take the title, not of king, but of Protector. Power was divided—on paper—between the Protector, the Council, and a Parliament. But the real power lay with the Protector, backed by the Army. The *Parliamentary* Republic—Pym's ideal—had failed; the *Presidential* Republic, under a 'Protector', was now to be tried.

#### 4. *The Protectorate of Oliver Cromwell*

Cromwell's position was unique in English history. He himself firmly believed that he had been specially called by Divine Providence to perform a great task. There was no hypocrisy

in this, nor in Cromwell's habit of constantly referring to the Divine guidance to justify his actions. The language of the Puritans may not suit modern taste, but it was sincere enough. Cromwell addressed himself to his task in a suitable spirit—without pride, but without weakness. He once compared himself to 'a good constable, set to keep the peace of the parish'. His enemies might object that he brought not peace but a sword. For it was the sword that had made Cromwell what he now was, the dictator of England, and, try as he might, he could never lay the sword aside.

The Good  
Constable

A staunch republican, Ludlow by name, once told Cromwell that, under his government, England had lost what the Puritan soldiers had fought for—government by the consent of the people. 'I am as much for government by consent as any man,' he answered, 'but where will you find that consent?' This was the crux of the whole matter. For not only was at least half England Royalist, but the Puritans themselves were by now so hopelessly divided that to reach any kind of agreement was impossible. Another critic told Cromwell that nine out of ten men in England were against him. 'Very well,' he replied, 'but what if I should disarm the nine, and put a sword in the tenth man's hands? Would not that do the business?' It would, and as long as Oliver lived, it did. When his first Parliament asked him to give up to them the control of the army, he refused. He refused because he could trust no one but himself to maintain order; and the events which followed his death showed that he was right.

Rule of the  
sword

The first Parliament of the Protectorate sat for four months (September 1654–January 1655). Oliver and his officers prevented 100 duly elected members from sitting because they refused to swear to uphold the constitution (under the Instrument of Government). In spite of this high-handed action—which makes the arbitrary acts of Charles I look small by comparison—the Parliament still caused him much trouble, for the remaining members discussed the Protector's powers and proposed to reduce the army. As soon as he could, Oliver dismissed the Parliament (January 1655).

First Pro-  
tectorate  
Parliament  
1654-5

He then tried the experiment of dividing England into twelve districts, each ruled by one of his Major-Generals (1655).

The Major-  
Generals  
1655

This military rule was necessary, Cromwell thought, because of the unquiet state of the country. There had been Royalist risings in Scotland and elsewhere. The Royalist plotters were joined by extreme republicans—the Levellers and the Fifth Monarchy Men,<sup>1</sup> who detested the Protector's rule. The officers suppressed these risings with a firm hand. The Major-Generals, besides putting down rebellion, set up a kind of censorship of morals, and tried to regulate the conduct of private persons in a manner odious to all freedom-loving people. Nothing that Oliver did was so unpopular as this. The Reign of the Saints could not be set up by force.

Second  
Parliament  
1656-8

Humble  
Petition  
and Advice  
1657

Next year Oliver gave up the experiment and called another Parliament (September 1656). As before, the Protector and the Council excluded room members whom they thought would oppose the Government. It was this Parliament which presented The Humble Petition and Advice (1657) praying Oliver to assume the crown. He considered doing so, not that he wanted the title of king—a 'feather in a hat' he called it—but because he thought the change would make for a settlement. But the army officers, staunch republicans, would have none of it, and he therefore refused the title. He was, however, installed again as Protector with larger powers, and consented to create a new House of Lords, chosen from the existing Commons.

But the new Parliament worked no better than the old. The Commons again criticized the constitution, and Oliver, thinking they were merely throwing the country back into confusion, dissolved the Parliament in anger (February 1658): 'I think it high time', he told them, 'that an end be put to your sitting, and I do dissolve this Parliament. And let God judge between you and me.' 'Amen', replied the defiant members. The Protector never met another Parliament. King and Church, Lords and Commons, had all gone; the army alone remained.

It will have been noted that many of Oliver's acts were just

<sup>1</sup> The Levellers, as the name implies, wanted to reduce all men to one level and to abolish distinctions of rank. The Fifth Monarchy Men believed that the world had been ruled (as stated in the Bible) by four monarchies—Assyria, Persia, Macedonia, and Rome. The last of these having fallen, it was time for the Fifth Monarchy—the reign of Christ and His Saints on earth.

as arbitrary and despotic as those of Charles I. But this was not all. Cromwell did not hesitate to tax the people without consent of Parliament, and to throw men into prison without any form of trial. Necessity was Cromwell's plea. 'If nothing should be done', said he, 'but what is according to law, the throat of the nation might be cut while we send for someone to make a law.'

Despotic  
Acts

But in spite of the obvious criticism that Oliver's government was just as despotic as that of the Stuarts which it had supplanted, there is much to be said in its favour. The reform of Parliament, introduced under the Protectorate, was a real advance. The Protectorate Parliaments included members from England, Scotland, and Ireland, thus giving to the British Isles a real measure of unity for the first time in history. Besides this the borough members were reduced from 430 to 139, and insignificant towns lost their seats to the larger and more prosperous towns. This desirable reform was swept away by Charles II, and the old decaying boroughs retained their members till the great Reform Bill of the nineteenth century.

Parliamen-  
tary Reform

The Protector, like the whole-hearted Puritan he was, was bent on a reform of the national morals and manners. He issued ordinances against drunkenness, duelling, cock-fighting, bear-baiting, and even horse-racing. He was himself a keen rider and hunter, and he stopped horse-racing only because it gave opportunities for gatherings of Cavaliers and other discontented persons. The Long Parliament had already closed the theatres, and Cromwell himself tried to enforce the Puritan Sabbath by law. His second Parliament even passed an Act to punish persons 'vainly and profanely walking' on the Sabbath Day. All this interference with the daily lives of the people made the Rule of the Saints very unpopular. But though, in some respects, Puritan views were narrow, the aim was high. 'The mind is the man', said Oliver; 'if that be kept pure, the man signifies somewhat; if not, I would very fain see what difference there is between him and a beast.' It cannot be doubted that there was much evil-living and drunkenness in seventeenth-century England. But Oliver, strict as he was, never dreamt of such a thing as prohibiting the sale of drink because some men might get drunk. 'It will be found', he

Puritan  
Reforms

wisely said, 'an unjust and unwise jealousy to deprive a man of his natural liberty upon a supposition that he may abuse it. When he doth abuse it, judge.'

In religious matters Oliver's Government has been described as the most tolerant set up in England up to that time. The State Church admitted clergy of the three main Puritan sects—Presbyterian, Independent, and Baptist—the 'three sorts of godly men'. But in practice nearly all the Puritan sects were tolerated, and even the Anglicans who wished to use the Prayer Book were not as heavily persecuted as they had been under the Long Parliament. Cromwell's notions of religious freedom, indeed, went far beyond those of his contemporaries. Public opinion would not permit of his tolerating Roman Catholics, yet he wrote to Cardinal Mazarin that he had 'plucked many [Catholics] out of the fire—the raging fire of persecution'. He added that it was his purpose 'as soon as I can remove impediments, and some weights that press me down' to make further progress towards fuller toleration. But he was never able to do so.

Question of  
Toleration

The Protector allowed some Jewish traders to come and settle in England—the first who had been permitted to do so since the expulsion of the Jews by Edward I. He also checked the Puritan fury against the Society of Friends, known as the Quakers. The Friends were founded (1647) by George Fox. This remarkable man was gifted with an almost supernatural power of convincing others by his preaching—a power which may be likened to that of some of the medieval saints. Fox believed that the only form of force which was worth anything was the force of example; his followers were exhorted to embrace martyrdom if need be, but never to resist. The Quakers were the first men in modern England to preach the essential wickedness of all war. In later times the good works done by them in acts of public and private charity have compelled the admiration of all classes. But in their early days they provoked fierce hatred by their habit of entering churches during a service and denouncing the preacher in the presence of the congregation. They were often brutally attacked, though Cromwell admired their sincerity, and often protected them from violence. He released many Quakers from prison. But

George Fox  
and the  
Quakers

he could not prevent Parliament from causing James Naylor, a Friend, to be pilloried, whipped, branded, and imprisoned for blasphemy. But to stay the force of religious bigotry was beyond even Cromwell's powers.

In foreign policy Oliver took a bold line. It was his dearest wish to see a league of Protestant Powers in Europe, with England at the head. The crowned heads of Europe had at first looked with equal scorn and hatred on the regicide government of England, but Blake's victories over Rupert and the Dutch made them change their tone. The usurper who had expelled the Stuarts was soon more respected in Europe than the Stuarts had ever been. Cromwell was rightly indignant at the news that the Duke of Savoy had massacred a large number of his Protestant subjects in Piedmont.

Foreign  
Policy

Massacre in  
Piedmont

Avenge, O Lord, Thy slaughtered saints, whose bones  
Lie scattered on the Alpine mountains cold

wrote Milton in a famous sonnet. Oliver's protests to the government of Louis XIV brought pressure to bear on the cruel duke, and the persecution was stopped.

Cromwell revived the Elizabethan tradition of hostility to Spain, a country which he regarded as the arch-enemy of the Protestant faith. He demanded that English traders should not be molested by the Inquisition, and that the West Indian trade should be thrown open. This, remarked the Spanish ambassador, was to ask 'for his master's two eyes'. Without waiting to declare war, Cromwell sent an expedition under Admiral Penn and General Venables to the West Indies, with instructions to attack Hispaniola (1655). Though this attack failed, the English took Jamaica, which has ever since been a British possession. Blake also carried out a blockade of the Spanish coast, and destroyed the Spanish treasure fleet at Santa Cruz. This was the great admiral's last exploit, for he died as his ship entered Plymouth Sound (1657). In the story of the English Navy Blake ranks with Drake and Nelson.

Spanish  
War

Jamaica  
1655

Meanwhile Oliver had made an alliance with France, then ruled by Cardinal Mazarin in the name of the young Louis XIV. An Anglo-French army attacked the town of Dunkirk, in the Spanish Netherlands. The brothers of Charles II, serving in

the Spanish army, witnessed the Ironside attack, and they could not but admire the valour and discipline of their countrymen as that famous army put the troops of Spain to flight (battle of the Dunes). Dunkirk was surrendered to Louis, who handed it over to Oliver. This was the last victory of the Ironsides (1658).

Dunkirk  
1658

The news of Dunkirk came to cheer a sick man. Oliver himself was soon to lay aside both sword and sceptre. The loss of a favourite daughter preyed on his failing health and spirits; he was seized with an ague and sank rapidly. September 3rd dawned, the day of victories, the day of Dunbar and Worcester. Cromwell did not live to see its close; before the evening that mighty, troubled spirit was at rest.

Death of  
Cromwell  
3 Sept.  
1658

Cromwell failed to solve the Stuart problem of how to combine parliamentary institutions with personal rule. The republicans were so divided amongst themselves that Oliver found it impossible to work with his Parliaments, and he had to fall back upon military force. He was the victim of 'Cruel Necessity'—words said to have been uttered by Cromwell over the dead body of Charles I. His religious policy pleased only some few moderates like himself. He crushed Catholic Ireland; he pacified Presbyterian Scotland; above all, he gave England peace after civil war. And, wrote Clarendon, 'Cromwell's greatness at home was a mere shadow of his greatness abroad'.

### 5. *The End of the Republic*

The Humble Petition and Advice had given Oliver Cromwell the right of naming his successor. He had named his eldest son, Richard Cromwell—a most unwise choice. Richard, though an amiable man, was more fitted for a quiet country life than for the task of ruling a turbulent nation. But such was the authority of the dead Protector that his son was at once installed in his place without question.

Richard  
Cromwell

In January (1659) the new Protector summoned a Parliament, which at once proceeded to quarrel with the army officers. The latter wished to make General Fleetwood head of the army instead of the Protector. Richard at first sided with Parliament, but was not strong enough to brave the officers, and at their bidding he dissolved his Parliament (April).



Next month the Rump reassembled at Westminster to assume the government, and Richard gave up his authority. Such was the end of the fiasco of the rule of 'Tumbledown Dick', as he was called. End of Richard's rule, 1659

For the remainder of the year 1659 the country was dangerously near anarchy. General Lambert prevented by force the entry of the members of the Rump to Westminster, and it seemed as if the naked sword must rule supreme. That it did not was due to the action of General Monk, the Ironside commander in Scotland. Monk saw that a settlement must be made, and determined to make it—but he wisely told no one what his exact intention was. He marched his army south and occupied London (February 1660). He then insisted on the Long Parliament being restored, including the Presbyterian members expelled by Pride's Purge in 1648.<sup>1</sup> There was, however, a general demand for a new Parliament, and so the old Long Parliament, first called by Charles I in 1640, at last dissolved itself (March 1660). General Monk  
End of the Long Parliament 1660

The elections were held amid great excitement, and the new Parliament—known as the Convention, because it was not summoned by a king—was assembled. It at once voted for the return of the old constitution—King, Lords and Commons, and the old laws. Charles II, already in communication with Monk, signed the Declaration of Breda,<sup>2</sup> by which he agreed to return and assume the crown. The Convention 1660

Charles II landed at Dover among scenes of tremendous enthusiasm, and on the 29th of May, his thirtieth birthday, he rode from Rochester to London, through miles of cheering multitudes. It took him seven hours to pass through the crowded streets of the capital to Whitehall. He reached the palace at last, and entered the Banqueting Hall, outside which his father's scaffold had once stood. Return of Charles II May, 1660

The old times had come back with an almost universal chorus of 'God Save the King'. The Puritan Revolution had failed, and it had failed mainly for three reasons. First, the people were tired of Puritan discipline, which attempted to make men good by force. Secondly, they were tired of the rule

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 471.

<sup>2</sup> See next chapter for details of this Declaration.

End of the  
Puritan  
Experiment

of soldiers, and were determined, whatever else might happen, never again to submit to a military dictatorship. Lastly, they were tired of revolutions, and looked, as people will look, to a return of 'the good old times'.

Yet the Puritans had left their mark on England for ever. Though much was restored, the arbitrary spirit of the old monarchy perished with Charles I. And though the Puritans were now in their turn to be derided and persecuted, something of their stern outlook remained to leaven the English character. Cromwell believed, as Erasmus and More had taught, that rulers have a responsibility towards their subjects, and this was a lesson which future generations were to remember.



An army on the march in the Civil War. Pikemen and musketeers can be clearly distinguished (see p. 462). Each musketeer carries a stand on which to rest his musket when firing.

# XXI

## CHARLES II AND JAMES II

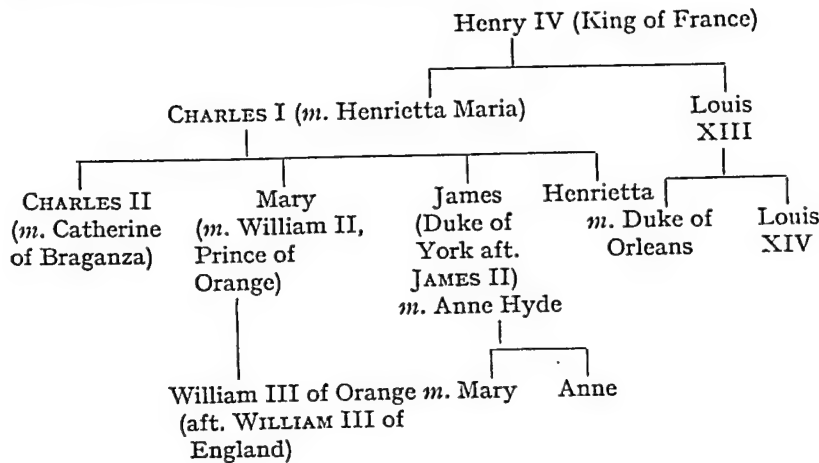
### I. *The Restoration*

#### (i) *In England.*

THE man who was welcomed back to England in 1660 with such enthusiasm was hardly a typical Englishman. His long residence abroad had made Charles II almost a foreigner in appearance and manners; his mother had been a French princess.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless Charles liked England, and it was his fixed determination never again to leave her shores—never, as he put it, to go on his travels again. This was a guiding principle—almost the only principle—of his life. Charles was a good-looking, easy-going man, with a fund of wit and good humour which endeared him to his companions and to the populace. His faults were those of the Cavaliers who crowded to his court, and whose lives expressed the reaction against Puritan severity. Neither the gaiety nor the scandals of his court, where satin coats and long flowing wigs now became fashionable, shocked popular opinion then as they shocked

Charles II  
1660-85

<sup>1</sup> Table showing the connexion between the House of Stuart and the French Royal House and the House of Orange:



later generations. In the midst of it all was the king, often too preoccupied to attend to business, but always ready to laugh at the latest jest.

So much appeared on the surface; but Charles had other capabilities. He was by far the ablest man of the Stuart family, and he was capable of carrying out deep-laid schemes, which he concealed under a charming manner and an apparent contempt for business. He was also quite capable of dishonesty, and was too cynical to value a sense of honour in other people. How far his plotting and dishonesty led him will appear presently. It never led him, however, to lose touch with popular feeling—he was too wise for that. A friend once summed up Charles's character in the words of a pretended epitaph:

\ Here lies our sovereign lord the king,  
( Whose word no man relies on,  
( Who never said a foolish thing,  
( Nor ever did a wise one.

‘True,’ replied Charles, with his ready wit, ‘for my words are my own, but my acts are my ministers’.

The first business after the king's return was to construct a ministry. Its members were chosen from the old Cavaliers who had followed the king into exile, and from the Presbyterians who had helped in his restoration. The chief minister was Edward Hyde, Earl of Clarendon, the Lord Chancellor. Clarendon had followed the House of Stuart through good fortune and through ill for twenty years. On him fell the main burden of uniting the old England of his memories with the new England which had come into being during his exile. For the first seven years of the reign he was, after the king, the most important person in England.<sup>1</sup> Clarendon's ideal was a restored Crown, working in conjunction with Parliament, and a restored Church, based on the support of the Cavaliers. Charles had not Clarendon's reverence either for Parliament or for the Church, and he had other views on both questions. But he did not interfere; he bided his time.

<sup>1</sup> There was then no Prime Minister; the king himself was always at the head of the ministry. The minister to whom he gave his chief confidence might hold any office, e.g. Clarendon was Lord Chancellor (1660–7), Danby was Lord Treasurer (1673–9).

The Restoration of 1660 was the restoration of the King, the Lords and Commons, and the Church (with nearly half the nation outside its pale). But the kingship restored differed from the kingship by Divine Right of James I and Charles I, and again from the personal rule of the Tudors; for the new kingship governed in the presence of a Parliament which maintained all the privileges won from Charles I before the beginning of the Civil War.

The Restoration settlement was based on the Declaration of Breda, signed by the king before he left Holland. In this Charles had promised four things: first, a general pardon to all the old Roundheads concerned in the Rebellion, save such as Parliament should except; second, the payment of arrears to the Ironside army; third, the settlement by Parliament of the land question, involving estates which had changed hands; and fourth, a 'liberty to tender consciences' in religious matters.

Declaration  
of Breda

The first three of these matters were dealt with by the Convention (April–December 1660); the religious question was settled later. Strangely enough, Charles himself was more mercifully inclined to old rebels than were the Lords and Commons. Eventually it was decided that the regicides, i.e. those who had actually taken part in the trial and execution of Charles I, should be marked out for vengeance. The regicides were brought to trial, and ten of them were executed. Another victim was the stern republican, Sir Henry Vane, who was not a regicide, but whom Parliament thought too dangerous to be left alive. Vane died for his principles, proud and brave to the last. A mean revenge was taken on the great dead. The body of Cromwell was dug up, hung in chains, and then beheaded; the remains of Bradshaw and Ireton were treated in a similar fashion. The heads were then stuck on poles over Westminster Hall.

Execution  
of the  
Regicides

The famous Ironside army was paid off, and the soldiers retired quietly and with dignity into private life. The whole country was tired of soldiers, and no English Parliament, however devoted to the monarch, would henceforth grant him the right of keeping a standing army. Charles II had to be content with a few guards, of whom Monk's Coldstreamers were the first.

Disband-  
ment of  
Army

The Land  
Question

The land question was a great difficulty, since so many estates had changed hands since 1642. Crown and Church lands were restored unconditionally to their original owners; so too were private lands directly confiscated by the Commonwealth. But Cavaliers who had been forced, through taxation, to sell their estates had to abide their loss. The king was accused of ingratitude on this account, but it is difficult to see what else could have been done.

Finance

The Convention also settled the important question of finance.<sup>1</sup> It was calculated that the total income of Charles I from all sources had been £900,000, but that his expenditure had exceeded that amount by £200,000. Parliament therefore granted Charles II a regular income of £1,200,000, to be raised by taxation, assuming that this would be a sufficient revenue on which to rule the country. But the full amount<sup>2</sup> was seldom forthcoming, and Charles was constantly having to ask Parliament for more. Herein lay the chief cause of his resolve to free himself from Parliamentary control.

Cavalier  
Parliament  
1661-79

The Convention, which contained the Presbyterians and Cavaliers who had combined to restore the king, was dissolved at the end of 1660. The Cavalier Parliament, which assembled the following year, was of a different character. Charles, observing that the members were full of enthusiastic loyalty and mostly young men, said he would keep them till they grew beards. He kept them for eighteen years (1661-79). It was this Cavalier Parliament which settled the religious question—to its own satisfaction. It was decided that the Anglican Church, with the bishops and the Prayer Book, was to be the Church of England; the Presbyterians, who had believed themselves secure, were undeceived. They had refused to tolerate the Sects; now they found themselves treated as *one* of the Sects, and excluded from the Church they had hoped to control.

The Anglican triumph was against the wishes of the king, but he found Cavalier zeal too strong for him. Clarendon, also, would have preferred a less harsh persecution of the Sects than

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 439.

<sup>2</sup> During the first half of the reign the taxes never brought in more than three-quarters of the promised revenue: and even the full amount would have been insufficient to meet the expenses of the government.

that on which Parliament insisted; but history has attached the name 'Clarendon Code' (1661-5) to the persecuting Acts passed at this period. First came the Corporation Act (1661) by which the government of town corporations was placed in the hands of Anglicans, and every holder of municipal office had to receive the Communion according to the rites of the Church of England. The following year an Act of Uniformity (1662) made the use of the Prayer Book compulsory in English churches. Two thousand Puritan ministers who refused to conform were turned out of their livings.<sup>1</sup> The effect of these two Acts was to create the division between the Church and the Dissenters (or Nonconformists, as those who refused to conform with the Act of 1662 were called) which has endured to the present day. In practice, those who wished to have any share in the government of their town or village conformed to the Acts. The result was that for many centuries 'Church people' were the rulers of England, and the Dissenters sank in the social scale.

Clarendon  
Code

But the Cavalier Parliament was not content with thus thrusting the Puritans out of the Church. A Quaker Act was passed (1662) inflicting severe penalties on those who attended Quaker meetings, and no less than 5,000 Quakers were cast into prison, many dying on account of their sufferings. The Conventicle Act (1664) inflicted similar penalties on those who attended any Nonconformist 'conventicle', or religious meeting. It was under this Act that John Bunyan, author of *The Pilgrim's Progress* (see p. 531), spent twelve years in Bedford Gaol. Lastly, the Five Mile Act (1665) forbade Nonconformist ministers to live, or to build chapels, in any corporate town<sup>2</sup> or within five miles of one.

Persecution  
of the Sects

The Puritan sects, though they suffered less as the years went by and Anglican fury cooled down, none the less did suffer severely. The Clarendon Code compares very unfavourably with the comparatively tolerant attitude of Cromwell. But the Sects, or Nonconformist churches as we must now call them, increased in zeal if not, for a time, in numbers. Though

<sup>1</sup> It should be remembered that a large proportion of the ejected ministers had obtained their livings by the ejection of their predecessors.

<sup>2</sup> A corporate town possessed certain municipal rights, and was governed by a corporation or town council.

only just allowed to exist, they henceforth became a permanent feature of English life.

(ii) *In Scotland.*

The Restoration settlement in Scotland was a different matter, since the Scottish Parliament did not dare oppose the king, or, indeed, attempt to represent the feelings of the country. Scotland suffered in every way by the Restoration. Cromwell had set up free trade between England and Scotland: this arrangement was now overthrown, and Scotland treated as a foreign country by England, to the disadvantage of Scottish trade.

But the main trouble was religion. Charles had, in 1650, sworn to observe both the National Covenant (see p. 453) and the Solemn League and Covenant (see p. 466). The former bound him to uphold the Presbyterian Kirk in Scotland, the latter to establish it in England. It was quite obvious—except to Scottish fanatics—that it was impossible for him to fulfil the second of these promises. But the Scots insisted, and, as a result, neither promise was fulfilled. The Scots had to accept bishops placed over their Kirk, though no attempt was made to introduce the English Prayer Book.

**Lauderdale** The Earl of Lauderdale was made Secretary for Scotland, and he ruled the country for twenty years. A religious persecution was carried on, which gradually turned the Scots into rebels. The National Covenant was denounced as illegal, Presbyterian ministers were prevented from preaching, and finally any one who preached or prayed at a conventicle was liable to the death penalty (1670). The spirit of the Government may be gauged from Lauderdale's remark that he hoped the Scots would rebel 'so that I might bring over an army of Irish Papists to cut all their throats'.

**Scottish Rebellion 1679** The rebellion came in 1679. In that year Archbishop Sharpe of St. Andrews—a turncoat Presbyterian minister—was murdered by Covenanters. This crime was followed by a serious rising in the West Highlands. Lauderdale was recalled, and replaced by the Duke of Monmouth, the eldest of the king's illegitimate sons, who led an army against the rebels, and defeated them at Bothwell Bridge (1679). Monmouth was



superseded by his uncle, James, Duke of York, the king's brother, who put down the rebellion with such ferocity that this period is known in Scottish history as the 'Killing Time' (1680-7). The Covenanters were hunted like animals, shot down at sight or taken and tortured. This horrible business—the worst of its kind in British history—continued after the duke became king as James VII (James II of England). But the English Revolution of 1688 finally rid the Scots of their hated king, and a brighter era then began.

The 'Killing Time'

## 2. *The Dutch Wars of Charles II*

In the seventeenth century there was little general desire for peace in Europe. Ambitious monarchs, or fighting traders and sailors, might cause war to break out at any time. In England the French, Spaniards, and more recently the Dutch, were regarded with varying degrees of suspicion and dislike. But the new reign began with a peace move; a Portuguese alliance was established, and celebrated by the marriage of Charles II to Catherine of Braganza, sister of the King of Portugal. Catherine brought her husband a handsome dowry of £800,000, while her brother ceded Tangier and Bombay to the English king. Charles, however, soon sold Bombay to the East India Company. He also sold Dunkirk to Louis XIV of France for £2,000,000.

Portuguese Alliance

Bombay

It was not long before the commercial rivalry of England and Holland in America, in Africa, and in the East<sup>1</sup> led again to war. The Second Dutch War (1664-7) followed the seizure by the English of New Amsterdam, the Dutch colony in North America (see p. 521), which was renamed New York in honour of the king's brother, the Duke of York. The duke and his cousin Prince Rupert were in command of the naval war while the Dutch were commanded by de Ruyter, and there were several battles (e.g. Lowestoft, 1665) in the North Sea. Meanwhile England was crippled by two great disasters which befell London, the Plague and the Great Fire (1665-6).<sup>2</sup> In 1667 the Government was so short of money and Charles's court was so extravagant that the sailors were left unpaid and mutinied, and the fleet was laid up at Chatham. De Ruyter took advantage

Second Dutch War 1664-7

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter XXII.

<sup>2</sup> See Chapter XXIV.

of this to sail up the Medway, destroy sixteen ships, and bombard Chatham dockyard; he sailed away again with the ship, the *Royal Charles*, in tow. This disgrace was keenly felt in England. 'Everyone nowadays', wrote Pepys, 'reflects upon Oliver, and commends him, what brave things he did, and made all the neighbouring princes fear him.' In the same year the Government made peace (Treaty of Breda, 1667), by which the Dutch submitted to the loss of their American colonies (New Amsterdam and New Jersey). As an offset, England gave up Surinam in South America to the Dutch.

The Dutch raid and its causes had made the Government very unpopular. Owing largely to the ill success of the war Charles decided to sacrifice his faithful friend Clarendon, who was dismissed (1667) and then impeached by Parliament for misconducting the war. The old minister fled to France, where he spent the rest of his life writing his famous *History of the Great Rebellion*. The profits from the sale of this work were afterwards used to provide a building for the University Press (also known as the Clarendon Press) at Oxford (1713).<sup>1</sup>

Charles's new ministry was known as 'the Cabal', a word meaning a secret intrigue, which happened to correspond to the initials of its five leading members—Clifford, Arlington, Buckingham, Ashley-Cooper, and Lauderdale. At first Arlington had charge of foreign affairs, and he negotiated the Triple Alliance (1668) between England, Holland, and Sweden against France—'the only good public thing that hath been done since the king came to England', wrote Pepys. Charles allowed this treaty to be signed, though he was at that very moment planning to repudiate it. He meant to ally England with France, a scheme which he confided to Sir Thomas Clifford, a Catholic, and then to Arlington, whom he won over to his side.

The famous alliance (1670) between Charles II and his cousin Louis XIV needs some explanation. On Louis' side the alliance was part of an extensive scheme to isolate the Dutch and then attack them. Louis, the *Grand Monarque* of French history, was a man of inordinate ambition. He wished to advance

<sup>1</sup> Clarendon's daughter, Anne Hyde, who had married the Duke of York, was the mother of two future queens of England.



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#### THE DUTCH IN THE MEDWAY

A contemporary painting by a Dutch artist of the capture of the *Royal Charles* by de Ruyter in 1667. (In the left lower corner is a copy of a letter of thanks to Admiral de Ruyter.) The sterncastle of the *Royal Charles* is still to be seen in the Rijksmuseum at Amsterdam.

the French frontier to the Rhine, and to absorb the Spanish Netherlands. But before he could proceed with these plans he saw that he must first destroy the power of the Dutch, and therefore break up the Anglo-Dutch alliance.

On Charles's side this alliance was part of a deep-laid plot. He confided this plot only to Clifford and Arlington, and to his sister Henrietta, Duchess of Orleans, who had married Louis' brother. It was the duchess who arranged the signing of the <sup>Treaty of</sup> Secret Treaty of Dover between Charles and Louis (1670). <sup>Dover, 1670</sup> In this Charles promised, first, in consideration of a sum of £300,000, to join in the attack on Holland (in spite of the Triple Alliance); and, secondly, to declare himself a Roman Catholic and then to re-establish the Catholic religion in England.<sup>1</sup> In case Charles's subjects should object, Louis promised a further sum of money and the aid of 6,000 French troops. Only a *sham* Treaty—omitting the religious clause of the Secret Treaty—was made known to Parliament or even to the members of the Cabal, except Arlington and Clifford, who were in the secret. Such was Charles's great scheme by which he hoped to free himself from the control of Parliament. He now pursued a foreign policy of his own, and it was not identical with that of his people or of his ministers. The Secret Treaty was 'the first act in the drama which ended in the Revolution' of 1688.

<sup>Third</sup> In 1672 Louis invaded Holland, and England entered the <sup>Dutch War</sup> war on the French side (Third Dutch War, 1672-4). At the <sup>1672-4</sup> same time Charles, in order to prepare the way for his proposed change of religion, issued a Declaration of Indulgence, which suspended the laws against both Dissenters and Roman Catholics. The Commons were furious with the king for suspending the laws, and refused to vote him supplies until he had withdrawn the Declaration. The king was obliged to give way. The Commons, in order to clinch the matter, then passed the Test Act (1673), compelling all who held State offices to <sup>Test Act</sup> receive the Communion according to the Anglican rites. <sup>1673</sup> The result of this was that the Catholic Clifford had to resign from

<sup>1</sup> It is improbable that Charles had any intention, or at least any expectation, of carrying out the religious terms of the treaty. But he wanted money from Louis.



6. WESTERN EUROPE IN THE TIME OF LOUIS XIV



the Cabal, and, more important still, that the Duke of York, who soon afterwards declared himself a Catholic, had to resign his command of the Navy.

Charles saw that the opposition was too strong for him, and, as he had no mind to go on his travels again, he told Louis that he would proceed no farther with his scheme. But Charles dismissed his Chancellor, Lord Shaftesbury (Ashley-Cooper), who suspected that he had been tricked. Shaftesbury, who became the leader of the opposition in Parliament, was a dangerous man to offend. 'It is only laying down my robe', said the ex-Chancellor, 'and buckling on my sword.' It was a sharp sword, as Charles was to discover. The king formed a new ministry under the direction of Sir Thomas Osborne, who was made Earl of Danby and Lord Treasurer. Since Danby was a Cavalier and a staunch Anglican, his appointment quietened the Commons for the time being (1673).

The following year Parliament insisted on England withdrawing from the Dutch War, and peace was accordingly made with Holland (Treaty of Westminster, 1674). The Dutch put up a gallant defence against Louis for another four years. As in the great days of the first William of Orange, they cut the dykes and flooded the country in order to protect themselves. Another William of Orange<sup>1</sup> was now made head of the state—a man whose life was to be spent in one long struggle against the power of Louis XIV. William, who was Charles's nephew (son of his sister Mary), was only twenty-two when in this dark hour he was called to the government of his country. But though William and the Dutch eventually brought Louis' famous armies to a standstill, their country never recovered from this treacherous French attack, and the equally treacherous attack of their so-called ally, England.

### 3. *Whigs and Tories*

Charles's main object was to get as much money out of Louis XIV as he could, in order to make himself as independent as possible of Parliament. Louis, for his part, since he could not have England for an ally, wished at any rate to keep her

<sup>1</sup> He was the great-grandson of William the Silent, who had fought Philip II of Spain.

neutral. He feared that the anti-Catholic feeling in this country might at any moment boil over into a demand from Parliament for a French war. So he paid Charles to prorogue Parliament as often as possible.

Charles's new minister, Danby, did not approve of this policy, though he did not venture to oppose the king. Danby was as much against France as any man, and it was due to him that the king's niece, Mary of York, married William of Orange (1677). This marriage was destined to change the course of English history, for it paved the way for Dutch William to succeed to the Crown.

Marriage of  
William and  
Mary, 1677

The last ten years of Charles II's reign form one of the most complicated periods in our political history. It was then that the two great historic parties, the Whigs and Tories, were formed. Danby made it his business to form a Court party (later called Tory) from the Cavaliers, based on devotion to the Crown and to the Church of England. Danby was the first party 'manager' in our history: he understood the art of holding a party together by patronage, that is to say, by the award of minor offices to faithful party men.

Danby  
1673-9

At the same time a Country party (later called Whig) was formed in opposition to the Court. The founder of this party was Anthony Ashley-Cooper, Earl of Shaftesbury, one of the greatest schemers and one of the greatest fighters in English politics. Even the poet Dryden, who said that Shaftesbury's name would be 'to all succeeding ages curst', admitted that the man was a 'daring pilot in extremity'. Just as Danby was party manager in the House of Commons, Shaftesbury was the first organizer of popular opinion outside the House. He formed the Green Ribbon Club in Chancery Lane, and from there organized a system of propaganda, carried on by writers and speakers all over the country.

Shaftesbury

The party of Shaftesbury was founded partly on the old Roundhead opposition to any extension of the royal power, partly on an appeal to the widespread fear and hatred of Roman Catholics. Slavery and popery, he declared, went hand in hand. A chance was soon offered him of exploiting to the full this old religious prejudice, which went back to the days of the Armada and Gunpowder Plot. In 1678 Titus Oates, a dis-

Titus Oates



reputable clergyman and one of the greatest liars in history, pretended to reveal a Jesuit 'plot' to murder the king. The plot was Oates's own invention, but he succeeded in convincing others of its truth, and made a deposition before a London magistrate, Sir Edmund Godfrey. Ten days later Godfrey was found murdered, transfixd by his own sword. The murder was assumed to be the work of the Jesuits, and at once the whole country went mad. The wildest rumours were circulated and believed—the Jesuits were going to set fire to London, kill the king, or betray the country to the French.<sup>1</sup> In the panic which ensued, not only in London but all over England, many innocent men lost their lives. A number of Catholics, innocent both of Godfrey's murder and of the alleged plot, were brought to trial, and the perjurer Oates swore away their lives.

The Popish  
Plot  
1678-80

Danby himself was nearly another victim, for it came out (January 1679) that he had been a party to the arrangements over one of Louis' cash payments to Charles. True, Danby had acted unwillingly, and only on the king's express command,<sup>2</sup> but the Commons would not listen to that excuse. They voted his impeachment, and to save his minister's life Charles dissolved Parliament, which had sat for eighteen years (Jan. 1679). The king pardoned Danby, but the new Parliament proceeded with the impeachment, thus asserting the principle that Ministers are responsible to Parliament for their actions, and Danby was sent to the Tower for five years.

Impeach-  
ment of  
Danby

Charles's chief minister was now Lord Halifax, known as the 'Trimmer', because he believed in moderation. But moderation was the last thing the two opposing parties considered. Shaftesbury's aim was to exclude the Duke of York from the succession to the throne, on the ground that he was a Roman Catholic. An Exclusion Bill was brought in, and read before the three Parliaments which Charles summoned and

Exclusion  
Bill  
1679-81

<sup>1</sup> There is no smoke without fire, and although most of Oates's story was a fable, it is true that Coleman, the Duke of York's secretary, had been carrying on a treasonable correspondence with Louis' Jesuit confessor. Coleman was tried and executed for high treason.

<sup>2</sup> Louis was aware of this fact, and knew that Danby was really anti-French. So he exposed Danby's part in the negotiations on purpose to ruin him. He paid an enemy to publish the facts.

dissolved in the course of the next two years (1679-81). It was during the Exclusion Bill debates that the famous names Whig and Tory were first applied to the rival parties. Both names were terms of abuse. Whig originally meant a rebel Scottish Presbyterian; Tory, a rebel Irish Papist.<sup>1</sup>

Thanks largely to Shaftesbury, one useful measure, however, was passed by a Parliament otherwise engaged in the fierce debates over Exclusion. The Habeas Corpus Act (1679) ensured (as it still does) that no British subject should be kept in prison without being brought to trial as soon as possible for the crime of which he is accused. This famous Bill would have been rejected in the House of Lords but for the practical joke of a lord who counted one fat peer as ten men!

While the Exclusion question was being debated Charles sent his brother out of the country, and upheld James's rights himself. The king's behaviour during this panic-stricken time shows him at his best. He remained cool throughout, and indeed he might almost be called the only public man in England who did not lose his head. His policy was to play for time, in the hope that the Whigs would ruin themselves by their violence. In this calculation he proved to be correct. Shaftesbury's first false move was to propose that the Duke of Monmouth, Charles's eldest illegitimate son, should be recognized as his heir, instead of the Duke of York. This offended many people, who still believed that there was something semi-divine about the person of a king, but could not extend their worship of royalty to a king's illegitimate children. The Whigs then tried to prove—though without success—that Charles had been really married to Monmouth's mother, Lucy Walters. Meanwhile they foolishly persisted in the hounding down of the so-called Popish plotters, in a way that was bound to produce a reaction. Many men were disgusted when old Lord Stafford, aged 69, was condemned on perjured evidence and executed (December 1680).

At the beginning of 1681 the tide began to turn. The anti-Papist fury became less violent, and people no longer believed

<sup>1</sup> At first the parties were known as Petitioners, who petitioned the king to call a parliament, and Abhorrers, who resented such interference with the king's prerogative.

everything that Oates said. Men who could remember the Civil War began to ask themselves where the strife between Whig and Tory would end. Charles judged that the time was ripe to get rid of Parliament, and the Whigs with it. He had just received a substantial payment from Louis, so he was not anxious on the score of supplies. He decided to meet Parliament at Oxford, away from the city mobs, which were on the Whig side. So Shaftesbury and his friends were obliged to ride through Oxford streets lined with hostile students, who hooted them as they passed by. As soon as Parliament assembled Charles dissolved it (1681). He never summoned another, and the Exclusion Bill was never passed.

Charles dis-  
solves Par-  
liament  
1681

Coolness had won, and Shaftesbury found his popularity beginning to fade away. The country looked on calmly while Charles proceeded to strike down his enemies. First he aimed a blow at that Whig stronghold, the City of London. He demanded the surrender of London's charter and then appointed a Tory mayor and officers. He followed this up by taking similar action against sixty-six boroughs (1682). Shaftesbury, afraid of arrest, fled to Holland, where he died in the following year (1683).

London  
Charter  
1682

Death of  
Shaftesbury  
1683

Finally the Whigs played into the king's hands by concocting a desperate plot to murder him and his brother at Rye House (1683) on their way back from Newmarket Races. The plot was betrayed and the leaders executed. Lord Russell, one of the Whig leaders, was implicated and condemned to death. Algernon Sidney, another prominent Whig, was next tried before Judge Jeffreys, who (at 35) had just been made Lord Chief Justice of England, and condemned to death on flimsy evidence. Thus the Whig party, for the time being, was utterly broken.

Rye House  
Plot, 1683

Charles lived another two years to enjoy his triumph; in 1685 he had a sudden and fatal seizure. In his last moments he showed the sense of humour which had never deserted him, apologizing to the waiting courtiers for 'being such an unconsionable time dying'. Before the end he received the last rites of the Roman Catholic Church from the hands of Father Huddleston, the old priest who had saved his life after Worcester, thirty-four years before.

Death of  
Charles II  
1685

#### 4. *James II*

Character  
of James II

James, Duke of York, who now succeeded to the throne as James II, was a very different man from his brother. He entirely lacked Charles's coolness and humour, and thought that every man who opposed him must necessarily be a rebel. It has been said that James never forgot an enemy, and seldom remembered a friend. Stubborn, revengeful, and entirely tactless, he was destined to lose, in the short space of three years, the throne which his brother had preserved and strengthened by a careful exercise of political craft.

Thanks to Charles's triumph over the Exclusion Bill, there was no opposition when James ascended the throne; the country had never been more quiet. No protests were made when the king heard Mass at Whitehall. Parliament met, and not only voted James the whole of the revenue granted to Charles II, but an extra supply of £400,000. Then came the news that Monmouth had landed at Lyme Regis (June 1685).

Mon-  
mouth's  
Rebellion  
1685

Monmouth was in Holland when he heard that his father, King Charles II, was dead. He decided to come to England and proclaim himself king, in the hope that a large number of his uncle's Protestant subjects would support him. But Monmouth was mistaken; he had no large following in England. He raised a small force in Wiltshire, Dorset, and Somerset, but it was outnumbered by the royal troops, commanded by Lord Feversham and John Churchill, afterwards the famous Duke of Marlborough. One summer night Monmouth and his men, many of them armed only with swords and scythes, tried to attack the royal camp on Sedgemoor.<sup>1</sup> In the darkness they stumbled up against an impassable ditch, and there they were trapped and shot down. Monmouth fled, and was soon afterwards captured. He was brought to London, but, after begging for his life from James in vain, he was executed at Tyburn. His rebellion had lasted less than a month (June–July 1685).

After the battle of Sedgemoor the rebels were cruelly pursued for several weeks by Colonel Kirke, whose soldiers were ironically called 'Kirke's Lambs'. Then the Lord Chief Justice

<sup>1</sup> For good accounts of Sedgemoor, see the later chapters of *Lorna Doone*; and *Micah Clarke* by Conan Doyle.

came down to the West, to hold his infamous 'Bloody Assizes', as they were afterwards called. Jeffreys bullied his wretched prisoners, laughed at their sufferings, and showed mercy to none. The worst case was the execution of an old lady, named Alice Lisle, whose only crime was that she had sheltered some fugitives. Altogether 300 persons were hanged, and 840 transported to the West Indies. On his return to London the cruel judge was welcomed by a grateful sovereign, and made Lord Chancellor.

The Bloody  
Assizes

The completeness of his victory made James feel secure. He did not disband his army, but kept 15,000 troops in camp on Hounslow Heath, near London. Parliament, which met again that winter, was suspicious of the king's intentions, and refused to vote full supplies until he had given some assurances in the matter of religion. But James, with troops of his own, and the hope of money from France, could now afford, so he thought, to be independent. He prorogued Parliament (November 1685), and it never met again during his reign.

It was James's intention to restore the Roman Catholic Church in England, and also to make the English monarchy a despotism, like that of France. But the methods by which he pursued these designs made them for ever impossible in England, and also brought about his own ruin. His cousin, Louis XIV, was the most absolute monarch in Europe; in France the word of the king was law, and there was no Parliament to gainsay him. The despotism of Louis was summed up in a famous phrase—*L'état, c'est moi*. But James could not see that the French system which he so much admired was detested in England. He himself expressed approval when Louis revoked (1685) the Edict of Nantes, which had guaranteed liberty of conscience to the French Protestants. But England looked on in alarm, and welcomed the Huguenot refugees.

Designs of  
James

Meanwhile the king proceeded to override the laws, especially the Test Act, which debarred Roman Catholics from holding official positions. James held that the Crown possessed a 'dispensing power', by right of which the king could dispense with the law in particular cases. In virtue of this power he proceeded to appoint Catholics to important positions in Church and State. His own brothers-in-law, Clarendon and

Dispensing  
Power

Attack on  
Universities

Rochester, were dismissed, Clarendon from the governorship of Ireland, Rochester from the Treasury. Catholic officers were appointed to the army; Catholics were introduced into the Privy Council. Then the king turned to the universities. A Catholic was appointed Dean of Christ Church, Oxford. At Cambridge the Vice-Chancellor was deprived of his office for refusing to confer a degree on a Benedictine monk. In 1687 the President of Magdalen, Oxford, died, and the Fellows elected a man of their own choice instead of the king's candidate, who was a Catholic. James visited Oxford in person, and in the end he got his way by turning twenty-five of the Fellows out of the college. Their places were taken by Roman Catholics.

First Declaration of  
Indulgence  
1687

In the same year the king issued a Declaration of Indulgence (1687) by which he suspended the laws against both Roman Catholics and Dissenters. By this action he hoped to enlist Dissenters' support for his policy, from which, of course, the Catholics were to be the chief gainers. Halifax, who, like Clarendon and Rochester, had been dismissed, wrote a pamphlet—of which 20,000 copies were sold—called a *Letter to a Dissenter* in which he gave the warning: 'You are therefore to be hugged now, only that you may the better be squeezed at another time.' The warning was not unheeded, nor were the Dissenters deceived as to the real intentions of a king who had approved of the revocation of the Edict of Nantes. Consequently James received much less support from them than he had expected.

Growth of  
opposition  
to James

By the close of the year 1687 James, by his hasty conduct, had alienated the sympathy of most of his subjects. The Tories, who had supported his brother, were now almost as alarmed as the Whigs; and Tory ministers, like Halifax and Rochester, had been driven into opposition. Above all, James had offended the Church of England by his wanton attack on the universities, the stronghold of Tory and Anglican sentiment. That sentiment, ever since the days of Charles I, had centred in the person of the king. James was therefore making enemies of the very people who had been most disposed to be his friends.

In these circumstances the possibility of deposing James in favour of his elder daughter Mary was discussed. Mary was

herself a Protestant, and she was the wife of the greatest Protestant leader in Europe—William of Orange. During the year 1687 many of the leading lords in England were in communication with William. But William refused to put himself in the wrong. He refused to take any hostile step against his uncle, unless he received a definite invitation from leading Englishmen to do so. The events of the following year made such an invitation not only possible but inevitable.

### 5. *The Revolution of 1688*

In May 1688 James reissued his Declaration of Indulgence, and gave orders that it should be read in all churches. This was more than the bishops, hitherto the king's most loyal supporters, could stand. Seven of them, led by Sancroft, Archbishop of Canterbury, petitioned to be excused from enforcing the order. James promptly sent them to the Tower, and ordered them to be tried for libelling the king. As the bishops entered the Tower the very soldiers on guard knelt to receive their blessing. The trial took place; the jury was at first divided; then came the verdict—Not guilty.

Second  
Declaration  
of Indul-  
gence  
May, 1688

Trial of the  
Seven  
Bishops  
June, 1688

There was tremendous excitement in London; bonfires were lit in the streets when the Seven Bishops were acquitted. This was on the 30th June. On the 1st July the queen, Mary of Modena,<sup>1</sup> gave birth to a son. These two events decided James's fate. The acquittal of the Seven Bishops was a great blow to his prestige, but the birth of the prince was the turning-point. For it was now clear that James's policy would not die with him; his son would, in the normal course of events, continue it. But though James II might possibly be tolerated for the rest of his life, the prospect of a James III was too much. There was only one thing to be done, and that was to summon the aid of the Prince of Orange.

Birth of the  
Prince of  
Wales  
July, 1688

The invitation to William was signed by the chief Whig and Tory leaders: Henry Sidney and Admiral Russell, who were Whigs and relations of the Rye House conspirators, Danby who was a Tory, and Lumley an ex-Catholic. These men and three other moderates signed the invitation which was carried

Invitation  
to William

<sup>1</sup> James's second wife, a Catholic. Anne Hyde had died some years before.

over to Holland by Admiral Herbert, disguised as a common sailor. William was given to understand that many important men, besides the actual signatories, would go over to his side, including Lord Churchill, James's best general. William was asked to bring an army over to England to restore English liberties. He accepted the invitation and began his preparations.

When it was known that the Dutch were raising an army and a fleet to invade England, Louis considered attacking Holland in order to aid James. But James was in an awkward position. He had already aroused the suspicion of his subjects to such an extent that he dared not risk making an alliance with France. He therefore refused the offer of French help, with the result that Louis lost patience with him and sent his army to the Rhine instead of to Holland.

In November 1688 William set sail from Holland and, helped by a favourable wind, came down the English Channel and landed at Torbay in Devonshire. His was the largest professional army that had invaded England since Roman times. He had 15,000 troops, of whom about 4,000 were English and Scottish soldiers who had served in Holland; the rest were Dutch, Swedes, and Germans. In the west country, as William advanced, the population was friendly; memories of Sedgemoor were too recent to allow of any loyalty to King James.

William advanced into Wiltshire; James led his army as far as Salisbury. But when Lord Churchill rode off in the night to join William, James decided to retreat, and he re-entered his capital. There he learnt that his younger daughter, the Princess Anne, had fled to join the enemy. London was in a ferment; the king's hopes were fast dying. He summoned a Council of Peers, and issued orders to treat with William. But already he knew that the game was up. While his ambassadors, Halifax and two others, were conferring with William at Hungerford, James fled from the capital on his way to France (December 1688). He had already sent the queen and the Prince of Wales out of the country.

The Council of Peers, whom James had summoned, now assumed the government, under Halifax. They invited William to co-operate with them in calling a free Parliament. Then the

Landing of  
William  
(November)



unwelcome news arrived that James had been captured at Faversham in Kent. He was brought back to London, but William arranged that some Dutch troops should carry him off to Rochester, where he was allowed to escape for the second time. On Christmas Eve he took a boat to France. He never landed in England again. Final flight  
of James  
(December)

Orders were now issued for the summoning of a Convention to settle the succession to the throne. It was obvious that James could not be restored, and that his infant son was hardly a popular candidate. There remained Mary, James's elder daughter. But Mary refused to accept the crown unless it was jointly offered to William; and William refused to reign as a mere king consort. So when the Convention met in January 1689 William and Mary were proclaimed king and queen as joint sovereigns. William and  
Mary

The Glorious Revolution, as it was afterwards called, had thus been accomplished without bloodshed, and a new era in English history had begun. For William and Mary, whatever Parliament might decide, were obviously not the rightful sovereigns of England according to hereditary principle. It was difficult to believe in the Divine Right of monarchs who owed their thrones to an Act of Parliament which passed over the lawful occupant. Divine Right died with James II, or rather with his departure from England. The new sovereigns, who owed their thrones to Parliament, had to promise to rule with the advice of Parliament. Thus the long struggle which began when James I met his Puritan opponents in Parliament and at Hampton Court ended when James II was driven from the throne. His failure was due to an ill-judged attempt to rule England regardless of the wishes of his subjects, and to subvert the laws and change the religion of his country. The  
Glorious  
Revolution

## XXII

### THE EMPIRE UNDER THE STUARTS

THE great discoveries of the Age of Columbus and Vasco da Gama had been followed, in the sixteenth century, by the foundation of the first two colonial empires of the modern world, those of Spain and Portugal. In the seventeenth century three more European colonial empires were founded, those of France, Holland, and England. The rivalries of these five Powers in America, Africa, and Asia form a great part of the colonial history of the seventeenth century.

The founding of these over-seas empires was accompanied by a commercial revolution—by a change of trade routes and a great expansion of commerce. The wealth of the European was increased, and his comfort was enhanced by new commodities such as tea and coffee, and (from the New World) the potato, cane-sugar, tobacco, and American mahogany. The explorers, missionaries, and merchants of Europe gradually penetrated all lands, and took with them their manners, languages, and institutions. This process of Europeanizing the world, one of the outstanding features of modern history, still continues.

#### *1. The First American Colonies*

Virginia 1607 The project of planting an English colony on the eastern shores of North America had first been undertaken by Sir Walter Raleigh. But, as we have seen (p. 398), this Elizabethan colony did not prosper. Early in the reign of James I the scheme was re-opened, and a London company was formed to send out colonists to Virginia. These colonists made the first permanent English settlement in North America, landing in Chesapeake Bay in 1607. The first township was called Jamestown, after the king.

These early Virginian settlers were not good colonists, and they would probably all have perished from starvation but for the energy of Captain John Smith. This remarkable man was a soldier who had spent a life of amazing adventure

fighting Turks and Moors, and now came to pit his skill against Indian braves, and to inspire the Virginians with something of his own spirit. His efforts in the first two years set the colony on its feet. He organized the food supply and set up fortifications against Indian attacks.

A few years later the famous tobacco plantations were begun. The soil was suitable, and the crops flourished so well that it was soon found necessary to import slaves from Africa and criminals from England to work the plantations. Tobacco-growing was profitable, and in time an aristocracy of rich planters grew up in Virginia. The planters lived in big houses on wide estates, with negroes and 'mean whites' as their dependents. The situation was not unlike that of an old manor lord and his serfs in medieval England.

Tobacco  
planters

The Virginia Company in England controlled the fortunes of the colony in its early years, and when the Company was abolished (1624) the Crown took control. There was also a Governor and Council on the spot. In 1619 Governor Yeardley made an interesting experiment. He called an Assembly, consisting of two men from each of the eleven townships in the colony. The Governor, his Council, and the Assembly roughly corresponded to the government of King, Lords, and Commons in England. This Virginia Assembly was the first of those colonial Parliaments which were afterwards instituted throughout the Empire; its first meeting is therefore an important landmark in colonial history.

Virginia  
Assembly  
1619

The next American colony was of a very different character; it was formed by religious exiles from England. Early in James I's reign a few Puritans, mostly from Lincolnshire, disgusted with their treatment in England, left England and sought a refuge at Leyden in Holland. After ten years' residence there some of them decided to emigrate to North America. They were joined by other Puritans from England, and the Pilgrim Fathers, as these exiles were afterwards called, left Plymouth in the *Mayflower* in September 1620. The same autumn they landed just north of Cape Cod and founded their first township, which they called Plymouth.

Pilgrim  
Fathers  
1620

Eight years later a larger and more influential body of Puritans formed a company called the Massachusetts Bay

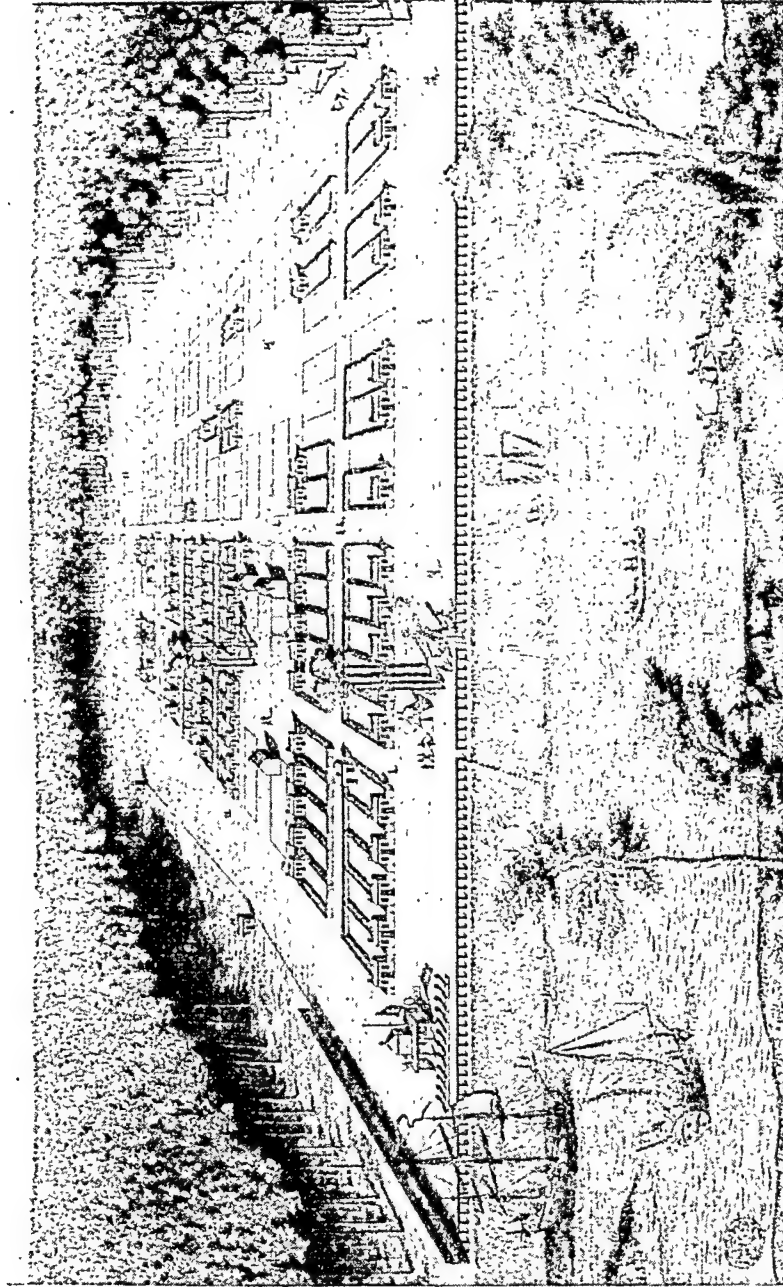
Massachu-  
setts  
1628-30 Company (1628) which obtained a charter from Charles I in the following year. Without leaving any representatives in England, the whole body of shareholders crossed the Atlantic in 1630 and formed the colony of Massachusetts. This colony prospered from the first. It received a steady flow of immigrants from England during the eleven years of Charles's personal government and the administration of Laud, and by 1640 it had a population of 20,000.

Religious  
Tyranny But though these Puritans had left home to escape from the religious tyranny of Laud, their own government was not less tyrannical than his. The first governor, elected by the colonists, was John Winthrop, a man of considerable ability but narrow views. Political rights in Massachusetts, no less than in England, were made to depend on conformity with a narrow religious creed. This creed was determined by the small circle of strict Puritans who surrounded the governor. Harsh punishments, like flogging and the cutting off of ears, were inflicted on moral offenders and on persons who ventured to differ from their rulers on minor points of religion. A clergyman called Roger Williams, driven from Massachusetts by this persecution, founded the colony of Rhode Island (1636).

Several other Puritan colonies were also formed to the north and south of Massachusetts; some of these, including the original settlement at Plymouth, were absorbed by Massachusetts. Eventually four separate Puritan colonies emerged—  
New  
England Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, and New Hampshire; and the whole group was known as New England.

The Puritan colonies were on the whole very prosperous, and continued to receive emigrants from England. The New Englanders tended to be less aristocratic than the Virginians, though narrow religious opinion prevented the growth of a real democracy. Their severance from England was more marked than that of Virginia, because they regarded themselves as exiles rather than colonists.

Newfound-  
land Several attempts were made during the early Stuart period to colonize the island of Newfoundland, which had been claimed for England by Sir Humphrey Gilbert under Elizabeth. James I granted a charter to certain Bristol merchants (1610) who planted a small colony at a place called Cupid's Cove.



THE FOUNDATION OF THE AMERICAN COLONIES  
A typical southern plantation in its infancy. (The view is of Savannah in 1734, the chief town of the colony of Georgia, founded in the same year; see footnote on p. 522.)

Later, Lord Baltimore, a Roman Catholic peer, made another settlement in Newfoundland, but it did not prosper. The early history of Newfoundland is chiefly a record of disputes and fights between the French and English fishermen, both of whom claimed possession of the coasts. It was the famous cod fishery, one of the most profitable in the world, which at that time gave the fog-bound island its only value.

Lord Baltimore was also responsible for the beginning of another American colony. He obtained a charter from Charles I to form a colony on the mainland; it was called Maryland in honour of the queen. He was made the proprietor of the colony, and was given absolute rights over its government. Maryland was founded by his second son, Leonard Calvert, who brought the first batch of colonists into Chesapeake Bay, where the town of St. Mary's was founded (1634). The Baltimores were Catholics, but from the first their colony was marked by religious toleration. Like its neighbour Virginia it engaged in tobacco planting and quickly became prosperous.

Two blocks of English territory were thus formed during the first half of the Stuart period—New England in the north and Virginia and Maryland in Chesapeake Bay, the two being separated by the Dutch colony of the New Netherlands in the Hudson valley. The French had also begun the colonization of North America, having settled in Acadie (Nova Scotia) and the St. Lawrence valley. In 1608 Quebec was founded by the great French explorer, Samuel Champlain, who also discovered the lake that bears his name and explored the country round Lakes Huron and Ontario. This was the beginning of the French colony of Canada, or New France.

North of Canada an Englishman, Henry Hudson, opened up the Arctic regions round the great bay that was named after him. Hudson made several voyages, some in English vessels, some in the service of the Dutch. He explored the Arctic regions in the service of the English Russia Company, and sailed as far east as Nova Zembla, north of Russia. Then, in Dutch service, he went to North America and discovered the famous river that bears his name (1609). The Dutch built the town of New Amsterdam (now New York) at the mouth of the Hudson River. The explorer sailed on his last voyage, in an

English ship, in the following year. He tried to find the North-West Passage to Cathay and the East, and discovered instead—Hudson Bay. Here he came to the end of his adventures, for his crew mutinied and set him and his son adrift in a small boat. They were never heard of again. The discovery of Hudson Bay gave English traders an opportunity to engage in the fur trade, in competition with the French Canadians.

The French and English also made settlements in some of the West Indian islands which had not been occupied by the Spaniards. The most important English island was Barbados (1625), where the sugar planters made fabulous fortunes. The English also took possession of St. Kitts and Antigua, and began to settle in the uninhabited Bahama Islands. The West Indies depended for their prosperity on the slave trade, which continued to flourish for many generations. Our largest West Indian possession was Jamaica, captured under Cromwell's government (1655). But the trade of Jamaica did not rival that of the much smaller island of Barbados, which was for long regarded as the 'chief jewel in the British crown'.

## 2. *The East India Company*

The first European traders in the Indian Ocean were the Portuguese, who established trading stations in the East Indies, in Ceylon, and on the coasts of India itself. The Portuguese supremacy in the East lasted throughout the sixteenth century. Then, at the beginning of the seventeenth century, the English and Dutch entered on the scene. The English East India Company was formed in 1600; the Dutch Company three years later. The profits from the voyage to the Spice Islands were enormous, and East India merchants soon made large fortunes.

The Dutch, however, drove the Portuguese from their trading stations in the East Indies, and soon established themselves there so firmly that they regarded the presence of the English in the islands as a trespass on their preserves. They were much better organized than the English, had a larger capital behind them, and were superior in numbers. Consequently the English, like the Portuguese before them, were driven from the East Indies. The end came when the Dutch

Amboyna massacre 1623 seized eighteen English merchants at Amboyna, imprisoned them, and put them to the torture. Then van Speult, the Dutch governor, had ten of the English prisoners executed in the presence of the natives (1623). James I could obtain no compensation for this atrocity; it was left for Cromwell, thirty years later, to do so at the conclusion of the First Dutch War. This was the end of English enterprise in the East Indies, which were left, as they still are, entirely in Dutch hands.

In India itself, however, our fortunes prospered better. Mogul Empire The Mogul Empire was about this time at the height of its power and magnificence. The founder of this great empire was a Mongolian adventurer named Baber, who invaded India (1526) through the Punjab and overthrew the previous Empire of Delhi. Baber's grandson was Akbar (1556-1605), who ruled over all northern and central India. Akbar's empire was one of the greatest in the world in the sixteenth century. Though his dominions were not so wide as those of the Akbar Sultan of Turkey or Philip of Spain, Akbar far surpassed these monarchs in the wisdom of his rule. Like the Delhi emperors before them, the Great Moguls were Mohammedans; but Akbar did much to unite the people over whom he ruled, both Moslem and Hindu. Under his son and grandson, Jehangir and Shah Jehan—contemporaries of James I and Charles I of England—the Mogul Empire reached the zenith of its power. Indian Moslem Architecture This was also the great period of Indian Moslem architecture; the Mogul emperors, it has been said, designed like giants and finished their work like jewellers. The wonderful palaces and tombs built by these monarchs can only be compared with the work of the Pharaohs of Egypt. It was Shah Jehan who built the Palace at Delhi and also the Pearl Mosque and the Taj Mahal at Agra (1630). The Taj Mahal, one of the most famous monuments in the world, was built to contain the tomb of the emperor's favourite wife.

The first Englishman to visit the court of the Great Mogul was William Hawkins, a relation of the slave-trader. Hawkins travelled to Agra (1607) and obtained permission from the Emperor Jehangir for Englishmen to trade in his dominions. A trading 'factory' or depot was then set up at Surat, which the Portuguese attempted to molest. But Captain





THE DUTCH AT THE CAPE (*see p. 518*)

A view of Capetown in 1652, with Dutch vessels in the foreground, and the flat-topped Table Mountain in the background

Best, with a few ships, so badly defeated a superior Portuguese squadron off Surat (1612) that the Portuguese retired from the neighbourhood. Not long after this the Portuguese, unable to compete with the Dutch and English, abandoned the struggle. They still retain, however, the city of Goa, on the west coast of India, which was once the centre of their eastern empire.

Other English factories After the opening of the Surat factory other English stations were planted on various parts of the Indian coasts. A small station at the mouth of the Hooghly river (1633) was the beginning of the English connexion with Bengal; while the factory called Fort St. George (1639) afterwards grew into the city of Madras. Such were the small beginnings of the Company which was later destined to dictate terms to the Great Mogul, and to rule India in his name.

The Dutch at the Cape Some of the activities of the Dutch during this period have a bearing on later British history. The Dutch took possession of the Cape of Good Hope (1652) and used it as a port of call on the route to the East. But the Cape Colony, under Dutch rule, was never fully developed, nor did it extend far inland. Farther south the Dutch navigators explored the northern and western coasts of Australia. Tasman, their most famous explorer, discovered the island now named after him, and also the southern island of New Zealand (1642), named after a province of Holland. The Dutch did not, however, make much use of these discoveries, and it was left for Captain Cook, in the next century, to reveal the eastern coast of Australia.

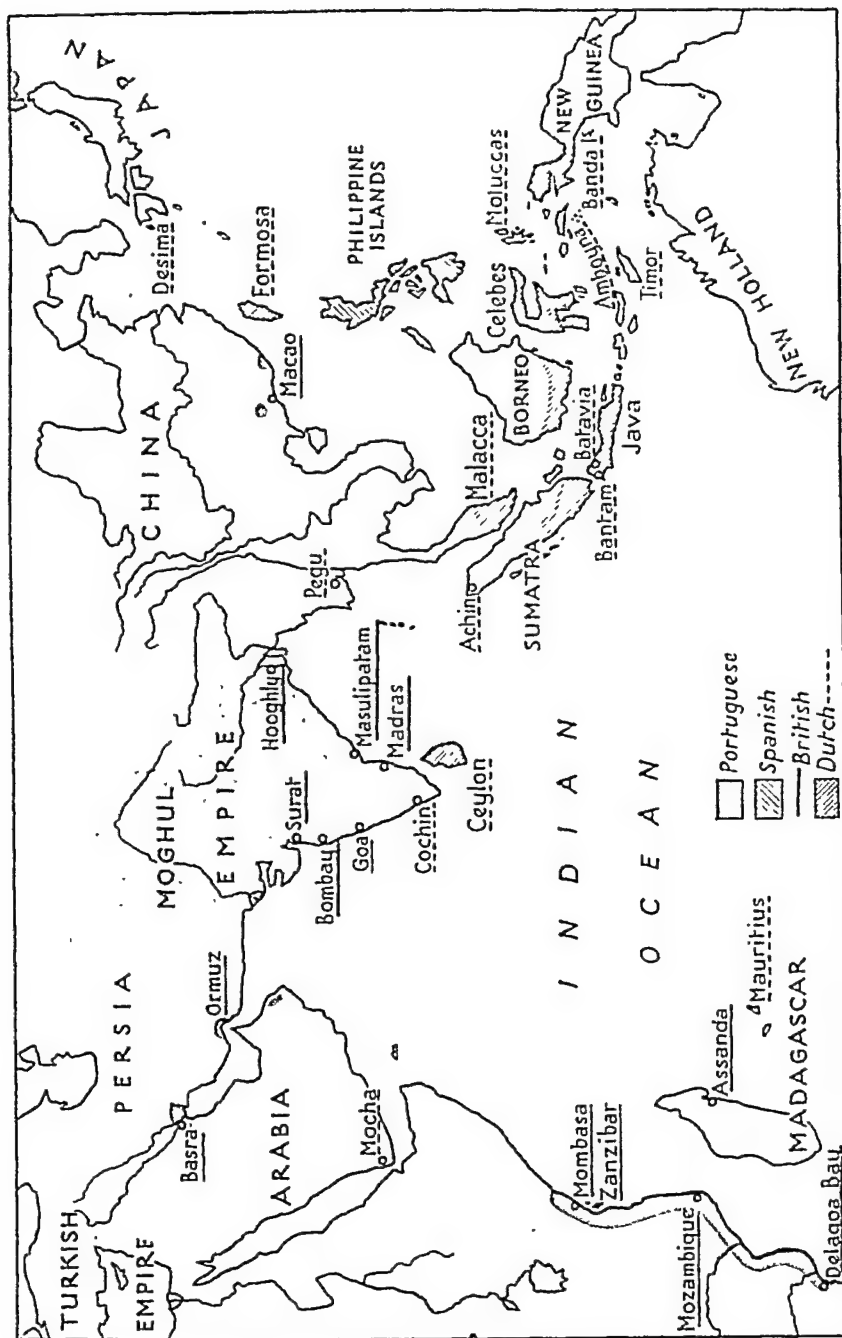
Australia  
and New  
Zealand

### 3. *The Mercantile Empire under Charles II*

English commercial hostility to Holland continued for many years after the Amboyna Massacre; it led, as we have seen, to the First Dutch War under the Commonwealth and the Second Dutch War under Charles II. The wonderful success of the Dutch in the early seventeenth century showed what a small nation, backed by a strong navy and rich colonies, could achieve. The example of Holland inspired both England and France to follow suit.

England  
and France

After the death of Cardinal Mazarin Louis XIV became his own *premier ministre*, but he appointed a very able man called



7. THE COLONIAL AREA: EAST. TIME OF CHARLES II



Colbert as minister of finance and the colonies. Colbert was the founder of the first French colonial empire. He created the French East India Company and organized the colonies in America. At this time, too, the French mapped out the interior of the American continent. Their great explorer, La Salle, sailed down the Mississippi to its mouth in the Gulf of Mexico (1682). After this a new French colony, Louisiana, was formed round the lower Mississippi. The French now controlled the main river system of North America, and the Great Lakes. Their future in America seemed assured.

Colbert and  
the French  
Empire

The Government of Charles II was not far behind that of Louis XIV and Colbert in colonial enterprise. The Commonwealth had made a great beginning by restoring the Navy, and Cromwell, with his designs on the Spanish Empire, had been a thorough-going imperialist. This policy was continued by the statesmen of the Restoration, nearly all of whom were keenly interested in the Empire. James, Duke of York, Prince Rupert, Clarendon, and Shaftesbury, all took a hand in the development of the colonies. In Charles II's reign the main lines of commercial and imperial policy—known as the Mercantile System<sup>1</sup>—were developed. Most statesmen and merchants then believed that the wealth of a country could be greatly increased by encouraging and protecting its manufactures and shipping, and by developing colonies; and those who held this creed were later known as 'mercantilists'. A rich nation, it was argued, ought to possess colonies, whose trade should be 'regulated' for the benefit of the mother country. In order to protect the colonies, and attack European rivals, there must be a strong navy. Since first Holland, and later France, were engaged in a similar policy, it was inevitable that the Mercantile System should lead to war. The desire to possess more colonies, and for the mother country to grow rich by their acquisition, outweighed all other considerations. The commerce of the First British Empire continued for a century to be regulated, for the benefit of England, on mercantilist principles—in fact until the loss of the American colonies in George III's reign, after which began the policy of 'free trade' or *laissez-faire* ('let things alone' instead of 'regulating' them).

British  
Empire  
and the  
Restoration

Mercantile  
System

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 321.

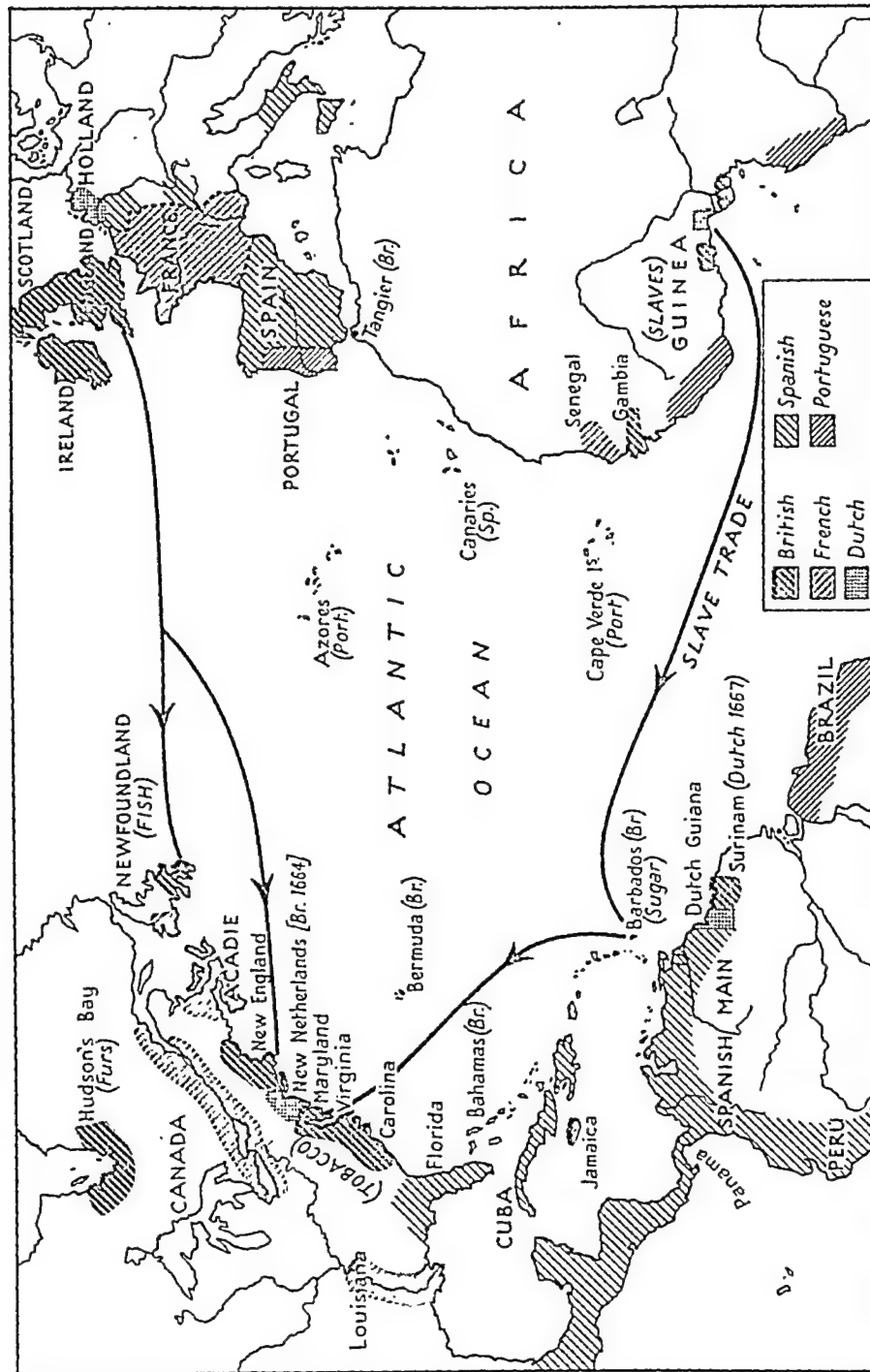
Navigation  
Act, 1660 A Navigation Act (1660), passed in the first year of Charles II's reign, laid down the principles on which colonial trade was to be carried on. It re-enacted the provisions of the Commonwealth Navigation Act, i.e. that trade between England and her colonies was to be carried only in English ships. It also ordained that certain 'enumerated goods', of which the chief were sugar and tobacco, could be exported from the colonies only to England.

Such was the imperial policy of the Restoration, a policy which viewed the Empire as a means of making England rich, and which jealously excluded rival nations from sharing in our colonial trade. It was a policy common to all the European nations which had overseas possessions. In two important respects, however, the English system was more enlightened than that of its rivals. The colonies were not taxed for England's benefit, and no attempt was made to interfere in colonial government. As long as the trade regulations were observed—and they were often evaded by smuggling—the colonies might manage their own taxes and other affairs.

Bombay Considerable additions were made to the Empire under Charles II. He sold Bombay to the East India Company, which thus gained one of its most valuable possessions. The Company's affairs were now so flourishing that its shares sold at a premium of 500 per cent. The attention of the Government was also given to West Africa and the West Indies, connected as they were by the lucrative but disgraceful slave trade (though no one thought it disgraceful at the time). A company called the Royal Adventurers (1662), with the Duke of York as governor, was formed to regulate the slave raids in West Africa. This company came to grief owing to the persistent attacks of the Dutch, but it was revived later under the name of the Royal African Company (1672). On the other side of the Atlantic large fortunes were being made out of sugar in the West Indies; the cheapness of slave labour made these islands valuable out of all proportion to their size. At the end of the century the exports from Barbados alone were worth £300,000 a year, while the exports from all the American mainland colonies combined were worth only £226,000.

Shortly after the Restoration, plans were formed for the





8. THE COLONIAL AREA: WEST. TIME OF CHARLES II



development of the land south of Virginia, to be known as Carolina (1663), in honour of the king. This land was granted to eight proprietors, including Clarendon, the Duke of Albemarle (General Monk), and Lord Ashley (Shaftesbury). This association of the leading men in England shows the great interest taken by the Government in colonization. The two colonies of North and South Carolina were eventually formed by these proprietors, the colonists being not English emigrants, but settlers from Barbados and Virginia. North Carolina long had an evil reputation on account of the bad character of the settlers. South Carolina owed much of its prosperity to the excellent harbour of the capital, Charleston. Negro slavery was introduced into both colonies.

Carolina  
1663

The year after the granting of the Carolina charter Charles II authorized his brother, the Duke of York, to take possession of the land between the rivers Connecticut and Delaware. This land was, of course, in possession of the Dutch, and the duke's seizure of it was an act of aggression in time of peace. The only excuse that can be given for it is that it followed similar conduct by the Dutch in the East Indies and West Africa. The New Netherlands were neither well populated nor well defended. Colonel Nicholls, whom the duke sent out to effect the conquest, captured New Amsterdam, the capital, without firing a shot (1664) and the whole colony was easily conquered, the capital being renamed New York in honour of the duke. At the Treaty of Breda (1667), which ended the Second Dutch War, the Dutch recognized the *fait accompli*, and the New Netherlands passed to England.<sup>1</sup> Though these colonies were obviously a useful acquisition, connecting New England with the southern colonies, the real importance of the conquest was not perhaps realized at home at the time. Actually it changed the whole history of North America. The Hudson valley led directly to French Canada, a fact of vast importance later on. The Canadians realized their danger. 'The king of England', remarked one of them, 'doth grasp at all America.'

Capture of  
New York  
1664

The foundation of the Hudson's Bay Company also dates from Charles II's time. He granted a charter (1670) to the

Hudson's  
Bay Com-  
pany, 1670

<sup>1</sup> They were afterwards formed into three separate colonies: New York, New Jersey, and Delaware.

Company, under the governorship of his cousin, Prince Rupert. The Company—the only Tudor or Stuart trading company which is still in existence—did a flourishing trade in furs. The territories to which it laid claim were of vague dimensions, and later on the traders came in contact with the French Canadians.

Pennsyl-  
vania, 1681

The last colony to be founded in America in Charles II's reign was Pennsylvania, the only inland colony, but connected with the sea by the Delaware estuary. Its proprietor, William Penn, was a Quaker, the son of that Admiral Penn who had conquered Jamaica. Charles II owed him £16,000, and he made the grant of land in settlement of the debt (1681). Penn began his colony as a refuge for Quakers, but it was open to all Christian sects. His was an enlightened rule, and he insisted on very fair treatment of the Indians. His chief trouble was with his own colonists, who were very quarrelsome. 'For the love of God', he wrote to them, 'be not so governmentish, so noisy and open in your dissatisfactions.'

Thus twelve out of the Thirteen Colonies<sup>1</sup> of America were founded in the reigns of the Stuart kings, and during the same period the foundations of our future dominion in India were laid. However much modern Englishmen may condemn the efforts of the Stuarts to establish absolute rule at home, they cannot at any rate withhold praise from those same royal Stuarts for laying the foundation of England's colonial and commercial greatness overseas.

It is interesting to note the relative importance of the various Stuart colonies at the time and at the present day. The West Indies, then valued most highly, are now a comparatively unimportant part of the Empire; from the few small factories in the East the Indian Empire has developed; while the North American colonies are now part of the United States of America. South Africa, Australia, and New Zealand were then undeveloped countries, all nominally Dutch possessions, while Canada was in the hands of the French.

<sup>1</sup> The Thirteen Colonies: four in New England—Massachusetts, Rhode Island, New Hampshire, and Connecticut; three formed out of the Dutch colonies—New York, New Jersey, and Delaware; Pennsylvania; Virginia and Maryland; and the two Carolinas. The thirteenth colony, Georgia, was planted in the next century—1733.

## XXIII

### THE CONQUEST OF IRELAND

#### 1. *The Tudors*

THE two islands of Great Britain and Ireland lie so near <sup>Ireland and England</sup> together that their close relationship seems to have been decreed by Nature. Nevertheless, for the greater part of her history, Ireland has taken her separate way and resisted, often successfully, the dominance of her larger neighbour. The Romans never entered Ireland, though it was a Roman citizen, St. Patrick, who introduced Christianity in the fifth century, and inaugurated what is known as the Golden Age of Irish learning and literature.

The first attempt to conquer Ireland from Britain was made when Strongbow, a baron from South Wales, sailed across St. George's Channel from Pembroke (1170). Henry II then took the title of Lord of Ireland, a title which was borne by his descendants. But the English dominion did not extend beyond the Pale—a strip of land along the east coast from Dundalk to Dublin, seldom more than thirty miles wide. As for the original Norman conquerors, they became 'more Irish than the Irish themselves'.

By the end of the Middle Ages Ireland had sadly degenerated. The light of Irish learning, which once shone so brightly in the island, was dim indeed; the priests were almost as ignorant as their people. There was no central government. Outside the Pale various tribal chieftains, who delighted in war and bloodshed, kept the country in a continual anarchy. The people were pitifully ignorant and poor, and in the more remote districts they led a semi-savage life.

The English conquest of Ireland was first seriously undertaken in Tudor and Stuart times. We have seen (see above, <sup>Ireland under Henry VIII</sup> p. 322) how Sir Edward Poynings was sent over to Ireland by Henry VII to assert the supremacy of the English Parliament; but Acts of Parliament were of little use so long as the country remained unconquered. Henry VIII, who took the title of King

of Ireland, dispatched an army to enforce obedience. He had the Earl of Kildare, the chief noble in the island, executed together with his five uncles. The other chiefs were bribed into nominal submission with the spoils of the monasteries, which, as in England, were dissolved.

Elizabethan  
Conquest—  
its ferocity

It was in Elizabeth's reign that Anglo-Irish relations took a more sinister turn: the conquest of Ireland showed the English at their worst. In the first place, Englishmen regarded the Irish as savages, and made no pretence of considering Irish wishes or feelings. Secondly, religious differences now widened the breach between the two peoples. The English Government insisted on introducing the English Prayer Book into Irish churches. It was natural that the Irish should resent the foreign rule and the foreign language imposed upon them. Elizabeth's Catholic enemies, the Pope and the King of Spain, were not slow to take advantage of Irish resentment against England. A Jesuit mission arrived in Ireland, which not only revived the Catholic Church but stirred up Irish patriotism. Philip of Spain sent two military expeditions to assist in rebellions against Elizabeth. All this accounts for, though it does not excuse, the ferocity of the English rule. The English garrisons were surrounded by a hostile population, who hated them as foreigners and heretics. On the other hand, the Irish were eager to help Jesuits and Spaniards to use their country as a base from which to attack England.

Desmond's  
Rebellion  
1579-83

Ireland was, in consequence, seething with rebellion throughout Elizabeth's reign. The two most serious risings were in Munster and Ulster. In Munster (1579-83) the rising was organized by the Earl of Desmond, and assisted by a Spanish force of 600 men which landed at Smerwick (Kerry). The English put down the rebellion, captured and massacred the Spaniards, and hunted the Irish rebels like animals. By the time this war of extermination was over, Munster was practically a desert. A plan was then adopted that had been tried in Mary's reign, when two counties—called King's County and Queen's County after Philip and Mary—were planted with English colonists. Large districts of Munster were treated in similar fashion; the native owners of the soil were expelled and English colonists took their places. Among these colonists

Plantations  
in Munster

were Sir Walter Raleigh, who introduced potato-growing on his estate at Youghal, and Edmund Spenser the poet, who wrote the *Facrie Queene*, his most famous poem, at Kilcolman House (Cork).

A more serious rebellion took place in Ulster, and raged during the last eight years of the queen's reign (1595-1603). <sup>Tyrone's Rebellion 1595-1603</sup>



IRELAND  
Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries

It was led by Hugh O'Neill, Earl of Tyrone, and Hugh Roe, the head of the O'Donnells. Tyrone inflicted a severe defeat on an English army at the Yellow Ford (River Blackwater) near Armagh (1598). The rebellion then began to spread, and there were risings all over Ireland, even in Leinster, the most anglicized province. Elizabeth sent her favourite, Essex, with a large army to Ireland (1599), but Essex did nothing except make a truce with Tyrone. He was replaced (1600), as viceroy, by Lord Mountjoy, a man of great ability. Soon afterwards

the King of Spain sent an army of 5,000 men (1601), who landed at Kinsale (Cork). Tyrone marched into Munster to join them, but Mountjoy beat him, and also brought about the surrender of the Spanish force, thus breaking the back of the rebellion. The viceroy then turned on the Irish, and began the systematic starvation of the countryside. His methods were successful, but so horrible that some of the wretched people are said to have turned into cannibals under the pressure of hunger. Tyrone submitted just before Elizabeth died. Ireland, conquered but sorely embittered, lay at the feet of the viceroy.

Mountjoy's  
Conquest

## 2. *The Stuarts*

The queen's successor, James I, continued the policy of plantations which had already been tried in Munster after the suppression of the Desmond rebellion. James's plantation of Ulster was the largest ever carried out in Ireland: nearly the whole province was made into an Anglo-Scottish colony (1608-11). Tyrone and his fellow leaders had fled the country, and this was made the excuse for a wholesale confiscation of land. The City of London was granted the town of Derry, which was colonized by Londoners and renamed Londonderry. The plantation of Ulster had more far-reaching effects than anything the English ever did in Ireland. It changed the whole character of the northern province, and caused that cleavage between northern and southern Ireland which remains to the present day. The Ulster colonists, besides being of different race, were of different religion; they were mostly English Puritans and Scottish Calvinists. Thus the foundations of Protestant Northern Ireland (1611) and, within a few years, of the British colonies in America (1607-20), were laid in the reign of James I.

Plantation  
of Ulster  
1608-11

Charles I's deputy in Ireland (1633-40) was Thomas Wentworth, who described his Irish policy in the famous word—'Thorough'. Wentworth kept Ireland in order by means of a well-disciplined army such as his master never had in England. He also doubled the revenue, put down piracy in the Irish Sea, and encouraged native industries, including that of Irish linen. But he was ruthless to any one who opposed him, and earned himself the name of Black Tom Tyrant. Just as he was pre-

Wentworth  
in Ireland  
1633-40

paring a fresh expulsion of native landowners—in Connaught—he was recalled to help Charles to deal with the dangerous situation which had arisen at home.<sup>1</sup>

The withdrawal of the strong hand of Strafford, coupled with the king's difficulties in England, had an inevitable reaction in Ireland. A formidable rebellion broke out in the autumn of 1641, when the conquered people rose in a frantic effort to redress the wrongs they had suffered since Elizabeth's time. The ferocity of Mountjoy's conquest, the injustices of the Munster and Ulster plantations, the persecution of the Catholic religion—all these were bitter memories, which were now to be ruthlessly avenged. The Ulster Protestants were driven from their houses and lands; four or five thousand persons were killed outright, and many more died of hunger. Rebellion of  
1641

Neither king nor Parliament could at this moment spare troops to conquer Ireland, and the country relapsed into anarchy. When Charles I was dead, so great was the general hatred of Puritans and the fear of a Puritan rule in Ireland that, for a brief period, all parties united under the Earl of Ormonde to support Charles II. It was then that the Commonwealth Government sent over Oliver Cromwell to write another page of Irish history in letters of blood. Cromwell  
in Ireland  
1649-50

Cromwell landed in 1649. He took Drogheda and Wexford, where a fearful massacre took place. Writing after the slaughter at Drogheda, Cromwell said: 'I forbade them to spare any that were in arms in the town; and I think that night they put to the sword about 2000 men. . . . When they submitted, their officers were knocked on the head, and every tenth man of the soldiers killed; and the rest shipped for the Barbadoes.... I am persuaded this is a righteous judgment of God upon these barbarous wretches, who have imbrued their hands in so much innocent blood.' He left General Ireton to continue these methods and complete the conquest. The whole country was starving, and its last defenders died in waste and silent places. No less ruthless than the Elizabethans, the Puritans showed no mercy to the conquered. When Cromwell became Protector, Ireton's work was done. One-third of the population of Ireland had perished in war or from famine. Drogheda  
1649  
  
Ireton

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 454.

Cromwell actually contemplated driving the whole native population beyond the Shannon. He sent over ex-Ironside soldiers—'godly men'—and gave them estates all over the country: two-thirds of the land of Ireland changed hands. But the Cromwellian landlords married Irish wives, and their children soon forgot their English religion and ancestry. Ireland remained Irish; it also remained Catholic. But the 'curse of Cromwell' added one more bitter memory to the list of Irish wrongs.

Under the Restoration Ireland was slightly happier. Charles II, as we have seen, was not a religious persecutor, and there was far less persecution in Ireland than in England under the Clarendon Code. The government evicted some, though by no means all, of the Cromwellian landlords.<sup>1</sup> But free trade, which Cromwell had established throughout the British Isles, was done away with at the Restoration, and Ireland, like Scotland, was treated as a foreign country in matters of trade. The export of Irish cattle to England was prohibited (1666), and the Irish were also forbidden, under the Navigation Act, to trade with the American colonies. Under James II the religious question came to the front again. James, of course, placed Roman Catholics in positions of authority, and by so doing aroused the hostility of Ulster. When his throne fell in 1688 the way was prepared for yet another unhappy conflict.

<sup>1</sup> Before 1641 the Protestants owned about one-third of the cultivable land of Ireland; after 1685 about two-thirds.



# DATE SUMMARY: STUART PERIOD II (1642-88)

## BRITISH ISLES

## ABROAD

### THE CIVIL WAR (1642-9)

1642-6 First Civil War	1642 Richelieu <i>d.</i>
1643 Solemn League and Covenant	1643 Louis XIV <i>acc.</i>
1644 ✕ Marston Moor	
1645 ✕ Naseby	
1648 Second Civil War. ✕ Preston	
1649 Charles I executed	

### THE REPUBLIC (1649-60)

1649-53 Commonwealth	
1649 Cromwell in Ireland	
1650 ✕ Dunbar	
1651 ✕ Worcester	
1653-8 CROMWELL PROTECTOR	1652-4 First Dutch War
1657 Humble Petition and Advice	1655 Spanish War. Capture of Jamaica
1658 Cromwell <i>d.</i>	1658 ✕ Dunkirk
1659 End of the Protectorate	

### CHARLES II (1660-85)

1660 Restoration	1660 Portuguese Alliance
1661-79 Cavalier Parliament	
1662 Act of Uniformity	
1665-6 Plague and Fire	1663 Carolina
1666-1710 Wren's rebuilding	1664-7 Second Dutch War
1667 Fall of Clarendon	1664 New York taken
Milton's <i>Paradise Lost</i>	
1670 Secret Treaty of Dover	1670 Hudson's Bay Company.
1673 Test Act	1672 William of Orange, Stadtholder, <i>acc.</i>
1678-80 Popish Plot	1672-4 Third Dutch War
1679-81 Exclusion Bill	
1679 Habeas Corpus Act	
1683 Rye House Plot	1681 Pennsylvania

### JAMES II (1685-8)

1685 Monmouth's Rebellion	1685 Revocation of Edict of Nantes
1687 Newton's <i>Principia</i>	
Declaration of Indulgence	
1688 THE REVOLUTION	

## XXIV

### THE AGE OF NEWTON AND WREN

#### 1. *Literature: Puritan and Cavalier*

<sup>Milton  
1603-74</sup> WHEN Charles II was restored to the throne John Milton,<sup>1</sup> who had been one of Cromwell's secretaries, was a comparatively old man, bearing the afflictions of poverty and blindness with patience and courage. In 1667 he finished *Paradise Lost*, one of the most sublime products of the human mind. The epic tells of the fall of Lucifer from heaven to hell, of his visit to earth, and of the destruction which he wrought in the Paradise which God had made there for the parents of mankind. It is written in blank verse of a quality which has caused Milton to be described as the last of the Elizabethans. Poor and old as he became, and disappointed in his life's work, he yet retained a sense of beauty which made him capable upon occasion of descriptions of unforgettable loveliness, and of the noble pathos of such lines as these, in which he refers to his blindness:

Thus with the year  
Seasons return; but not to me returns  
Day, or the sweet approach of even or morn,  
Or sight of vernal bloom, or summer's rose,  
Or flocks, or herds, or human face divine;  
But cloud instead, and ever-during dark  
Surrounds me, from the cheerful ways of men  
Cut off, and, for the book of knowledge fair,  
Presented with an universal blank  
Of Nature's works, to me expunged and rased,  
And wisdom at one entrance quite shut out.

(*Paradise Lost*, iii.)

Milton had allied himself with a party which earned a reputation for a bigoted hatred of gaiety and beauty. Some of his

<sup>1</sup> In his pamphlets Milton had powerfully expressed the opinions of the Puritan party. In his *Areopagitica* (1644), the most famous of his prose writings, he laid down for all time the principles on which the freedom of the press is based.

friends were undoubtedly of this narrow and intolerant cast of mind; but a consideration, to name only two men, of the work of Milton and his fellow secretary and poet, Andrew Marvell, is in itself enough to dispose of the mistaken idea that Puritanism is merely another name for an unreasoning hatred of what is gracious and beautiful. The Puritans were serious-minded men who detested the looseness which, in their opinion, was undermining their country's life and religion. Hence their hatred of everything which was associated in their minds with courts, palaces, and those

luxurious cities, where the noise  
Of riot ascends above their loftiest towers,  
And injury and outrage; and, when night  
Darkens the streets, then wander forth the sons  
Of Belial, flown with insolence and wine.

(*Paradise Lost*, i.)

The second great epic of Puritanism, *The Pilgrim's Progress*, <sup>Bunyan</sup> was the work of a brazier of small education, John Bunyan. <sup>1628-88</sup> He was a convert to Puritanism in its most extreme form, and was much distressed by what he considered the wickedness of his early life. In 1653 he joined a Puritan sect recently formed in Bedford. In the first year of the Restoration he was committed to gaol (under the Conventicle Act of 1593) for preaching in a farm-house. 'He hath (so ran the charge) devilishly and perniciously abstained from coming to church to hear divine service, and is a common upholder of several unlawful meetings and conventicles, to the great disturbance and distraction of the good subjects of this kingdom, contrary to the laws of our sovereign lord the king.' Bunyan was imprisoned for twelve <sup>His im-</sup> years (1660-72); and it was during this time that he began <sup>prisonment</sup> the book that has made his name immortal. <sup>1660-72</sup>

Though so differently placed in life, Bunyan resembles Milton in his religious outlook; his work is based upon the English Bible. There is hardly a line in *The Pilgrim's Progress* <sup>The</sup> but reminds the reader how deeply he had drawn upon that well <sup>Pilgrim's</sup> of noble and simple English. Consider the opening, so simple <sup>Progress</sup> and direct and vivid:

As I walked through the wilderness of the world, I lighted on

a certain place where there was a Den, and I laid me down in that place to sleep; and, as I slept, I dreamed a dream. I dreamed, and behold, I saw a man clothed with rags, standing in a certain place, with his face from his own house, a book in his hand, and a great burden upon his back. I looked, and saw him open the book, and read therein; and as he read he wept and trembled; and, not being able longer to contain, he brake out with a lamentable cry, saying, 'What shall I do?'

Many of the ideas of Milton and Bunyan, particularly their grim preoccupation with death and damnation, may be not much to the taste of the modern reader; yet their work continues to be read—*Paradise Lost* because it is one of the world's most noble and scholarly poems, *The Pilgrim's Progress* because it is an intensely human story, told with a dramatic vividness and a sense of character and a burning sincerity which stamp it as a great work of art.

Changes at  
the Res-  
toration

There are few greater contrasts in our history than that between the age of the Puritan Republic and the age of Charles II. The Restoration meant far more than the overthrow of republican government and the return of monarchy: it meant the end of a great experiment in religious and social life. Since the Puritans first appeared in the reign of Elizabeth, nearly a century before, earnestness in religion had been the dominant note in English life. With the Restoration all this was changed, and the difference was seen in the gaiety of Court and town and the revival of the theatre. But the change went deeper than this: it was reflected in many departments of life, in the Church, in literature, and in the new interest in science.

The Clergy

The bishops and clergy of the Church of England were, during the century following the Restoration, an orthodox and distinguished body of men; but they disliked religious enthusiasm, which savoured too much of the sects which they had overthrown, and they saved their enthusiasm for politics. The great majority of the clergy were Royalists, and preached the duty of submission to the Lord's Anointed. They bitterly hated the Church of Rome and all its works, a passion which they shared with the majority of Englishmen.

Religious indifference was especially prevalent among the courtiers of Charles II, and it was plainly reflected in literature.

The most characteristic writing of the Restoration appears in its satires, its comedies, and its essays. The writers of the day, taking their cue from the king, paid very little attention to the great Elizabethan literature, and very much (though often not so much as they pretended) to French ideas, methods, and styles. They avoided seriousness, and produced no tragedies which can be compared with those of Shakespeare, whose fame greatly declined, not to revive until the eighteenth century. Wit and polish were the two qualities by which the writers of the day set most store, and for which Restoration Comedy is particularly renowned. Its most esteemed writers were Congreve (*The Way of the World*), Wycherley (*The Country Wife*), and Farquhar (*The Beaux Stratagem*), and the plays named are still performed.

Restoration  
Literature

Dryden, the leading literary man of the time, wrote much for the theatre, and in a great variety of styles. In satire Dryden was most at his ease and most successful. In the masterly use of wit, irony, and sarcasm he is equalled only by Alexander Pope in the next century. His *Absalom and Achitophel*, which deals with the politics of the time, is a masterpiece, while in lighter vein his *MacFlecknoe* is exceedingly amusing to read. Some of Dryden's odes, particularly the bold and stirring *Alexander's Feast*, are still famous.

Dryden  
1631-1700

Another satirist of genius was Samuel Butler, author of *Hudibras*, the name he gave to Sir Samuel Luke, the Puritan knight under whom Bunyan served in the Civil War. Butler's caricature of the Presbyterians might apply to any of the Puritan sects, as seen through the eyes of the Restoration:

Butler's  
*Hudibras*

A sect whose chief devotion lies  
In odd, perverse antipathies,  
In falling out with that or this  
And finding somewhat still amiss;  
More peevish, cross, and splenetic  
Than dog distract or monkey sick;  
That with more care keeps holyday  
The wrong than others the right way;  
Compound for sins they are inclined to  
By damning those they have no mind to;  
Still so perverse and opposite,  
As if they worshipped God for spite.

## 2. *The Rise of Modern Science*

The greatest men of the seventeenth or Stuart century were not hostile to religion; indeed, like Boyle or Wren, they were often orthodox believers. Nevertheless the scientific spirit, destined to control the future of the world, took hold of men's minds in this century, while the ardent religious spirit declined.

Modern science dates from the discoveries of the Renaissance.<sup>1</sup> Although in the sixteenth century attempts were made to investigate the principles of several sciences, little of permanent value was achieved, apart from the researches of the astronomer Kepler (1571-1630) into the laws governing the motion of the planets. Kepler's work laid the foundation of  
 Astronomy modern astronomical science. The introduction of the use of logarithms (1614) by Napier greatly lightened the labour of astronomical calculations, while the invention of the micrometer (1639) by Gascoigne converted Galileo's telescope into an instrument of precision, adapted for exact measurement.

The science of Pure Mathematics had progressed hardly at all beyond the stage to which the early philosophers had brought it. The study of Geometry followed the lines laid down by the ancient Greeks, and that of Algebra those of the Arab teachers. A notable step forward was taken when two  
 Mathe- Frenchmen, Descartes (1596-1650) and Pascal (1623-62), began to apply algebraical methods to the solution of geometrical problems. An even more important advance was made when Newton (1642-1727) and Leibniz (1646-1716) worked out the Infinitesimal Calculus, which has proved of the utmost service to workers in every branch of science and has contributed materially to the development of modern engineering. Newton's work was not confined to Mathematics, but embraced also achievements of outstanding importance in Mechanics and Astronomy.

Newton Sir Isaac Newton was born near Grantham, and entered Trinity College, Cambridge, in the year of the Restoration. At the early age of twenty-three he was made Professor of Mathematics, which appointment he held for twenty-five years. His

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 294.

researches led him to enunciate certain fundamental principles of Mechanics, known as the Laws of Motion and the Law of Gravitation. These and other scientific doctrines he set forth in his *Principia*, published in 1687. Notwithstanding his immense contribution to the sum of human knowledge, Newton was notably modest, and compared his discoveries to those of a child who has gathered a few shells on the shore of a boundless ocean; if he had seen farther than some men, it was because he stood on the shoulders of giants—a graceful compliment to his predecessors. Prompted by Newton's astronomical researches, his friend and pupil, Halley (1656-1742), investigated Halley the motion of comets, and discovered (1682) the periodicity of the famous comet that bears his name.

In the realm of Physics, too, some degree of advance has to be recorded. The principle of the barometer was discovered by an Italian experimenter named Torricelli (1608-47), and this in turn led to the discovery by Robert Boyle (1627-91) of the Boyle relation between the volume and pressure of gases, known as Boyle's Law. Boyle published in 1667 a work called *The Sceptical Chymist* in which he boldly challenged the theories held at that time regarding the constitution of matter, and put forward the view that all matter is composed of minute particles—the basis of the Atomic Theory of later days. Boyle was one of a small group of men who founded during the Civil War a society called the Invisible College, which preceded the Royal Society. The group also included Newton and Ray.

Two Englishmen, Ray and Woodward, devoted much time Ray and Woodward to the systematic classification of animals, plants,<sup>1</sup> and rocks, the result of their work being published in 1695. In the realm of Human Anatomy progress was marked by the discovery of the circulation of the blood by Harvey (1578-1657). Later Harvey the microscope enabled observers to enlarge the field of Harvey's researches by studying the composition of the blood. These men, and others like them, extended the limits of man's knowledge of the material universe, and laid the foundations of the vast amount of scientific information which grows with each

<sup>1</sup> The Swedish naturalist, Linnaeus (born 1707), may be called the founder of modern Botany and Zoology.

successive generation of workers, and which serves to give men ever-increasing command over the forces of Nature.

### 3. *English Life under Charles II*

Population  
of England

Perhaps to us the most astonishing fact about Stuart England is that there were only 5 or  $5\frac{1}{2}$  million people in it. In Charles II's day much of the north of England was a waste land, though the Yorkshire dales were fully cultivated and thrived on the woollen industry. But all over England there were large tracts of uncultivated land, while the old villages, nestling round their churches, remained little touched by the hand of time.

The  
country  
squires

Macaulay, in the third chapter of his famous *History*, has drawn a picture of this England with which most people are familiar. He shows how isolated the village life then was. Even the squire, at the head of the village community, was sometimes<sup>1</sup> as ignorant as the peasants living in their thatched cottages. For the squire, unless he was a wealthy man, received an indifferent education at the local grammar school, seldom went to London, and passed most of his life upon his estate. His uncouth dialect, like that of the villagers, would not have been understood except by the men of his own and neighbouring counties. The wealthier gentry were in better case. They could afford to send their sons to Oxford and Cambridge, to lay out their estates with care and taste, and to furnish their houses with libraries. The country parson was often an ignorant man, and almost always poor. Some clergymen eked out a living by becoming chaplains to wealthy noblemen; but they were regarded as little better than servants, and frequently married the waiting-women, their children following the plough with the other village lads. The educated clergy were chiefly to be found in the towns.

The  
country  
clergy

In Stuart times, as now, there were a large number of unemployed persons, whose maintenance was a perpetual problem. The Elizabethan Poor Law was the instrument which dealt; or attempted to deal, with this problem; it was amended by an important Act passed in 1662. The Poor Law administrators

The Poor

<sup>1</sup> Though not so often as Macaulay supposes.



in London were too often burdened by vagrants who wandered into the capital in search of employment, and became a charge on the rates. Parliament passed an Act (1662) empowering local authorities to remove such persons back to their place of birth, where alone they could claim relief. This forcible removal of a man from one parish where he chose to reside to another was an extremely harsh proceeding. The Act caused much suffering, for it prevented the mobility of labour and chained the unemployed to their native places where often there was no work to be had.

Legal  
Settlement  
1662

It was no gentle England over which Charles II reigned. Fighting in various forms, and rough sports, were the delight of all classes. The cruel sports of cock-fighting and bear-baiting were very popular. It is possible that men were less brutal than their grandfathers in Tudor times, but they were brutal enough. In London it was considered one of the sights of the town to watch the wretched lunatics at Bedlam; and men arranged parties to gaze at the whipping of the women prisoners at Bridewell. All the prisons were, as Macaulay says, hells on earth, where the victims of the law lived in conditions of unspeakable foulness, and contracted the most loathsome diseases.

Sports

English people in the seventeenth century were quarrelsome to a degree that now seems incredible. Fighting in the streets was a common occurrence; men were continually fighting duels, while even Oxford dons were known to give each other black eyes. A French ambassador made this comment on the English character: 'When I reflect that this land produces neither wolves nor venomous beasts, I am not surprised. The inhabitants are far more wicked and dangerous.' Drunkenness was a national vice, and few were free from it. Before we condemn the Puritans for their severity we should picture the England in which they lived—an England which was 'merry' indeed, for men were often drunk; a fighting, brawling, rowdy England; an England where the people were sometimes wilder than the beasts.

Fighting

Drunken-  
ness

The towns of Stuart England were none of them large, except London, which contained half a million people. The next largest towns were Bristol and Norwich, with 30,000 each. The

Towns

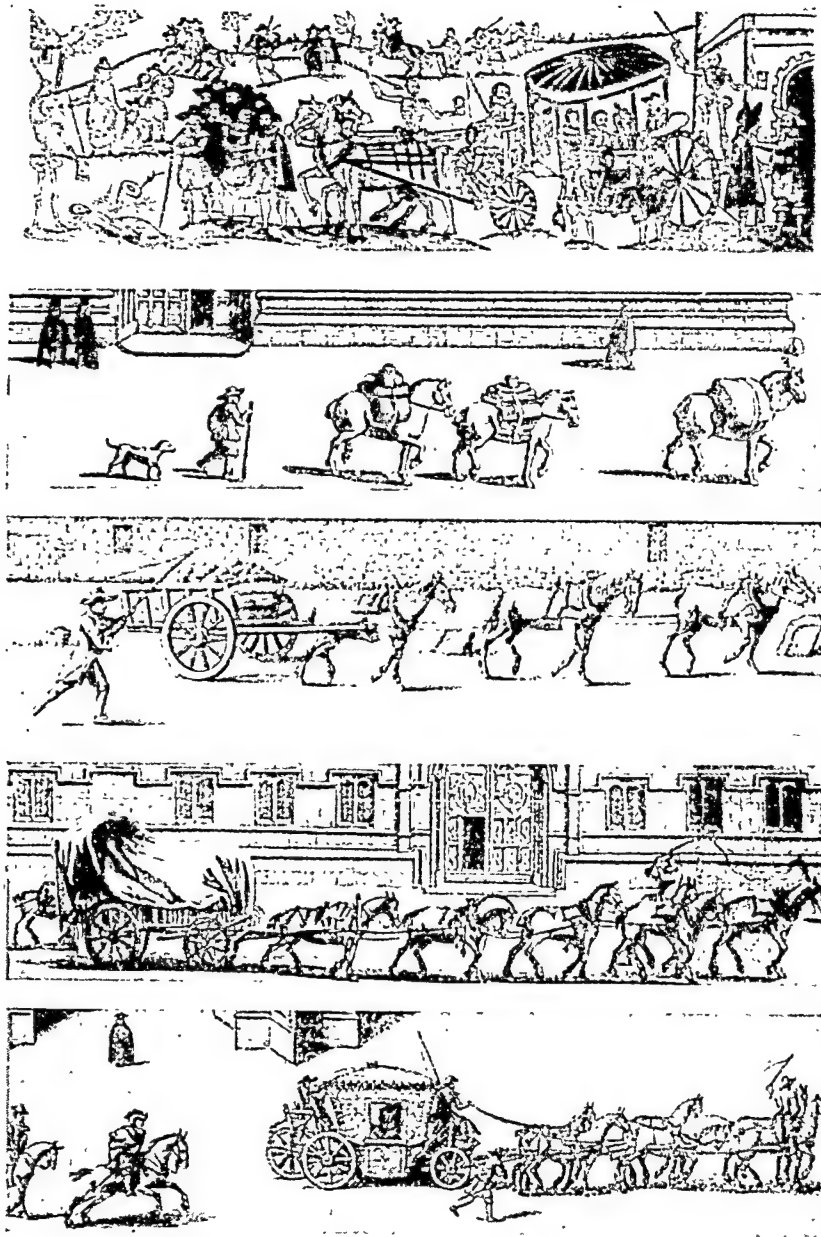
county towns all had a local importance greater than they have to-day. York, Shrewsbury, Exeter, and Norwich ranked as provincial capitals for the north, west, south-west, and East Anglia respectively; and the difficulty of getting to London added to their importance. But, by our standards, all the towns were small. Samuel Pepys, visiting Bristol in 1668, remarked with astonishment on the fact that he could look round him and see nothing but houses.

**Roads and Transport** The roads which connected the towns were unbelievably bad. In winter they were almost impassable for any kind of vehicle, and coaches which attempted a journey were apt to get stuck fast in the mud. "Besides the discomfort of cold and fatigue which this slow progress involved, there was the danger of attack from highwaymen, who infested all the so-called roads. The fastest method of travel was on horseback; the mails were carried strapped to the saddle on pack-horses. Nevertheless, some improvements were made on the main roads in Charles II's reign. It was then possible in a stage-coach to do the journey from Oxford to London (55 miles) in twelve hours. From London to York took four days in summer, six in winter; such was the speed of the wonderful 'flying coaches'. The coaching inns of England were excellent; food, drink, and entertainment were all plentiful, and, after such journeys, we may agree that the travellers needed them.

**Inns** London contained a tenth of the population of England; it was seventeen times larger than the second biggest town—Bristol. Before the Fire the houses were mostly made of wood, and the streets were little better than alleys. Down the centre of each ran a river of filth, for London was then innocent of sanitation. The Thames itself, though it was London's chief means of communication and always covered with barges conveying passengers, was foul with sewage. There was a large annual death roll, particularly among children; the wonder is that so many lived. The stench of the city, particularly in summer-time, was wellnigh intolerable.

**Lack of sanitation** Old London, with its walls still standing, thirty feet high in some places, did not extend far west of the Strand. The Oxford Road—the modern Oxford Street, the busiest street in London—still ran between hedges. There was no Embankment, and

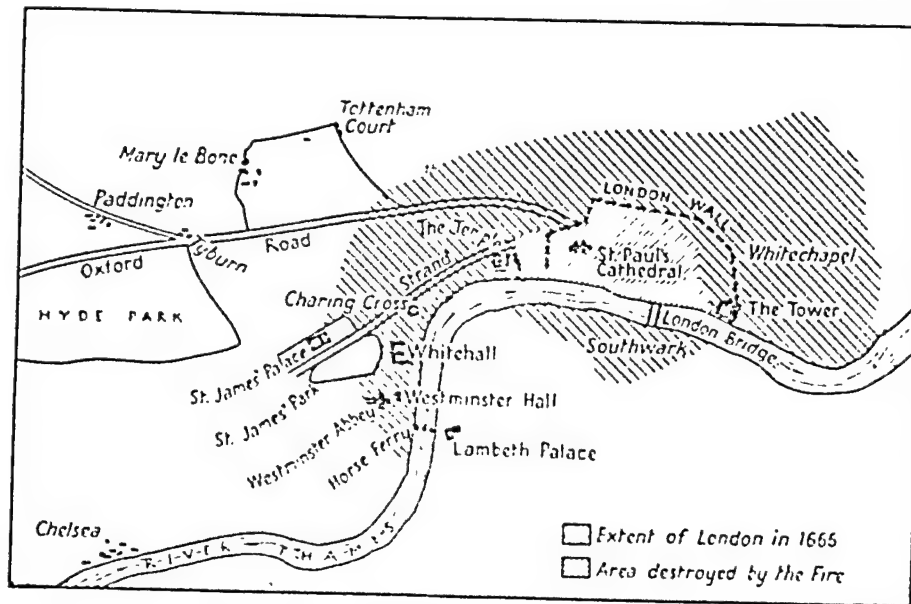
**Extent of London**



#### SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY TRANSPORT

The topmost picture is from a print of 1665 representing Londoners flying from the Plague. The other scenes are details from Loggan's famous series of engravings of Oxford Colleges

people descended to the river by crazy steps built down the mud banks. Merchants lived and slept in the City, instead of deserting it at night for a more distant abode. The houses of the wealthy were not placed apart; in suburbs, but built haphazard, often with a stinking alley on one side and an ale-house on the other. Rowdy mobs sometimes hooted my lady's



CENTRAL LONDON, SHOWING THE SIZE OF THE CITY IN 1666

coach as she passed along the narrow, cobbled streets, lit at night by a footman carrying a torch before her.

England was very seldom free from plague at any time before the eighteenth century; nor, in the absence of sanitation, can we wonder at this. A plague at the accession of James I had carried off 30,000 people. The Great Plague of London, in 1665, was one of the worst of its kind. A hundred thousand Londoners died in six months; it was a time of horror, when all men fled from the once crowded streets. 'What a sad time it is', said Pepys, 'to see no boats upon the river; and grass grows all up and down Whitehall court, and nobody but poor wretches in the streets!'

After the Plague came the Great Fire, which raged for five days (2-7 September 1666) and burnt up half London. The

area destroyed was the heart of the City, from the Tower to Fleet Street. London was expanding both eastwards and westwards in Charles II's time; the untouched parts were therefore Westminster and the modern West End, and the slums of Whitechapel and Stepney to the east of the Tower. It was unfortunate that these slums were not destroyed, for the terrible housing conditions there remained unaltered for centuries. Old St. Paul's, together with eighty-eight other churches, was destroyed. The City had to be rebuilt, brick and stone taking the place of the old walls of lath and plaster.

The sight of the Fire was one which those who saw it never forgot. Samuel Pepys, the famous diarist, thus describes it:

'Having seen as much as I could now, I away to Whitehall, and there walked to St. James's Park . . . and walked to my boat; and there upon the water again, and to the fire up and down, it still increasing, and the wind great. So near the Fire as we could for smoke; and all over the Thames, with one's face in the wind, you were almost burned with a shower of fire drops . . . When we could endure no more upon the water, we went to a little ale-house on the Bankside . . . and there stayed till it was dark almost, and saw the fire grow; and, as it grew darker, appeared more and more; and in corners and upon steeples, and between churches and houses, as far as we could see up the hill of the city, in a most horrid, malicious, bloody flame, not like the fine flame of an ordinary fire. . . . We stayed till, it being darkish, we saw the fire as one entire arch of fire from this to the other side of the bridge . . . it made me weep to see it. The churches, houses and all on fire, and flaming at once; and a horrid noise the flames made, and the cracking of the houses at their ruin. So home with a sad heart.'

Pepys and  
the Fire

#### 4. *Renaissance Architecture*

The Great Fire gave a magnificent opportunity for the rebuilding of London, of which, unfortunately, advantage was not taken. If Wren's plan, embracing wide streets and splendid quays, had been accepted, England would have had the finest capital in Europe. As it was, the houses and streets were put up on the old sites, and a great opportunity for town-planning neglected.

There were two great periods of architecture in England, each lasting about three centuries—the Gothic (c. 1200–1500),

English  
Renaissance  
Architec-  
ture

and the Classical or Renaissance (c. 1550-1850). The Classical style, as its name implies, was modelled on the ancient buildings of Greece and Rome; it was reintroduced into Italy at the time of the Renaissance. Italian workmen penetrated into England. An early example of Italian Renaissance work is Henry VII's tomb in Westminster Abbey (1512). Traces of the same style may be seen in many English country houses built during the Tudor period.

Inigo Jones  
1573-1652

In the Stuart period Renaissance architecture came into its own. One of its chief exponents was Inigo Jones (1573-1652), who modelled his style on that of the Italian architect, Palladio. He was employed by both James I and Charles I. For Charles I he designed a new palace at Whitehall, which unfortunately was never completed; but the Banqueting Hall (1619), a fine piece of Renaissance work, still remains. Inigo Jones also designed Covent Garden, and several country houses. His influence on English architecture was profound.

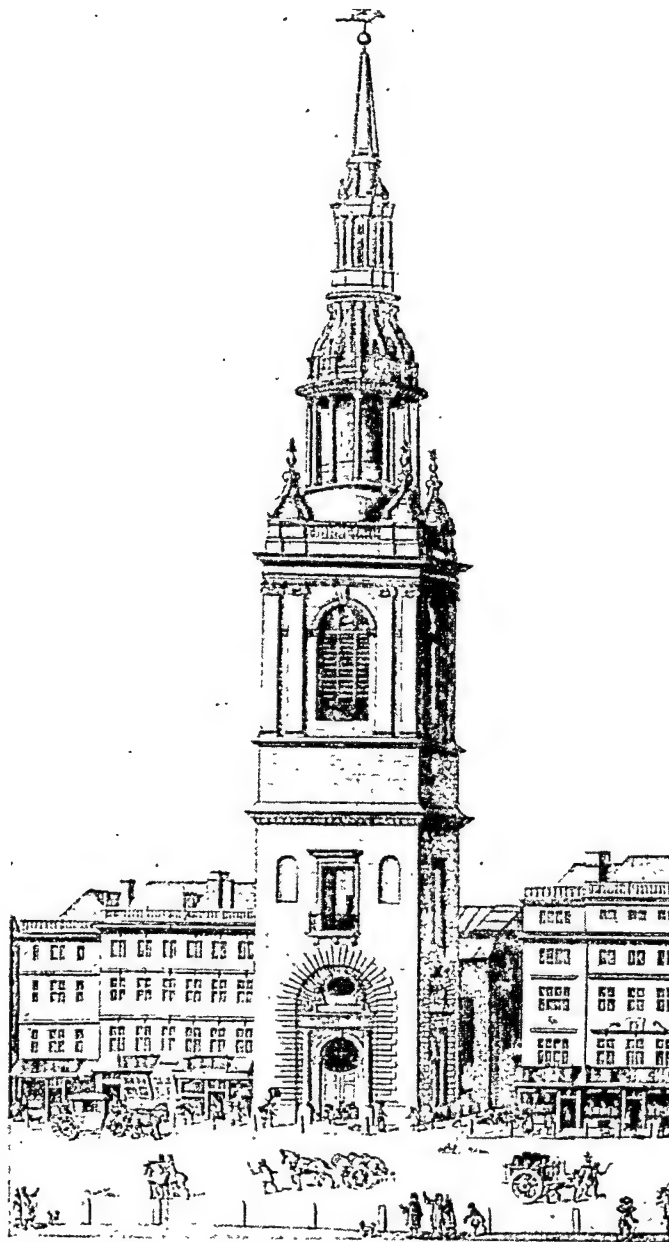
Wren  
1632-1723

Sir Christopher Wren (1632-1723), England's greatest architect, was born at East Knoyle, in Wiltshire, and was educated at Westminster School and at Wadham College, Oxford. He was made a Fellow of All Souls, and became a Professor of Astronomy and one of the founders with Boyle and others of the Royal Society. He seems to have taken to architecture as an afterthought; but after the Great Fire he was appointed surveyor-general of the royal works, and commissioned to rebuild St. Paul's.

St. Paul's  
Cathedral

St. Paul's Cathedral, Wren's masterpiece, is one of the finest Renaissance cathedrals in Europe. The glorious dome, which dominates the city of London, rises over the stately Classical building, fronted with Corinthian pillars. The cathedral took thirty-five years to build (1675 to 1710). Wren designed fifty other London churches, of which St. Martin, Ludgate, St. Mary-le-Bow, Cheapside, and St. Clement Danes, Strand, are perhaps the best known. After London, Wren's best work is to be seen at the two Universities; at Oxford, the Sheldonian Theatre, Queen's College Chapel, and Tom Tower, Christ Church; at Cambridge, Trinity College Library, and Emmanuel and Pembroke Chapels. Wren also designed the schoolroom at Winchester (known as 'School'); the Monument

Oxford and  
Cambridge



ENGLISH RENAISSANCE ARCHITECTURE

St. Mary-le-Bow, Cheapside, one of Wren's City churches.  
From an engraving in the collection made by Samuel Pepys

(to commemorate the Fire); and large parts of Greenwich Hospital and Hampton Court Palace.

Wren's influence—and he lived to be ninety—extended over the rest of the Stuart period and into the Georgian. In Queen Anne's reign Sir John Vanbrugh designed, in the Classical style,<sup>1</sup> Blenheim Palace, Woodstock, as a residence for the Duke of Marlborough. All over England men were building similar, though smaller, mansions; and the older English towns can all show Queen Anne houses, usually built of brick, of great charm and beauty.

Renaissance architecture held the field throughout the eighteenth century, when many of the finest houses and public buildings in England were erected and a great deal of the old residential part of London was built. Old Regent Street, since unhappily destroyed, was built by James Nash at the beginning of the nineteenth century, after which the Classical style underwent a decline. The long period during which it was in fashion—from James I to George IV—was the period during which England rose to the rank of a great imperial Power. Architecture, it has been said, is the mirror of an age. Just as the Gothic spires,<sup>2</sup> heavenward-pointing, speak to us of the Age of Faith, so the stately, dignified houses of Carolean and Georgian England remind us of the sturdy, confident generations who built them.

<sup>1</sup> The Classical style shows to least advantage in our village churches, where it first appeared in the form of local monuments to departed squires, who dominate the village church in death as they dominated the village itself in life.

<sup>2</sup> For a contrast between the two styles, see, first, Westminster Abbey, and then St. Paul's Cathedral.



## THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY—INTRODUCTION

THE eighteenth century has often been described as a formal, conventional time, when men lived an unhurried existence, with little to disturb the quiet routine of their days.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, to some minds, there is much that is attractive in this picture of the last century of Old England—before the railways were built, before modern industrial towns existed, and when there was no rush and noise (at least until the end of the century) of steam-engines and machinery.

Though, as we shall see presently, there is much in this picture of a steady, placid life that is deceptive, it has some measure of truth in it. Politically, Britain was static. The great constitutional change of 1688 established the landed gentry firmly in power, and their position was never seriously shaken till the Reform Act of 1832. Those—and they were many—who praised the ‘Glorious Revolution’ of 1688 praised it because it had given England a constitution thought to be perfect. The ‘constitutional monarchy’ of the Hanoverians took the place of Stuart ‘divine’ kingship; to the turbulent days of Charles and James succeeded the quieter rule of the ministers of King George.<sup>2</sup> The power of Parliament was supreme, and the aristocracy controlled Parliament; this, again, was not seriously challenged till the nineteenth century.

The English aristocracy was firmly established socially, no less than politically. Until the French Revolution (1789) came to inspire certain thinkers with ‘Jacobin’ ideas, it was unusual to question the rightfulness of the existing order, sanctified by custom and even by religion. This favoured aristocracy made

<sup>1</sup> ‘The first reaction of many minds to the words “eighteenth century” is a vision of beaux in coloured silk garments, drinking coffee out of small cups, while engaging in elegant philosophical small talk with ladies in towering powdered head-dresses and patched cheeks.’ G. M. Trevelyan in *The Age of Johnson*, vol. i, p. 1.

<sup>2</sup> The first twenty years of George III were an exception. See Chap. XXVIII.

many good uses of its opportunities; among the gentry were many patrons of art, and builders of the beautiful Queen Anne and Georgian houses of the eighteenth century. Not all English squires were the heavy drinkers portrayed by Fielding in *Tom Jones*.

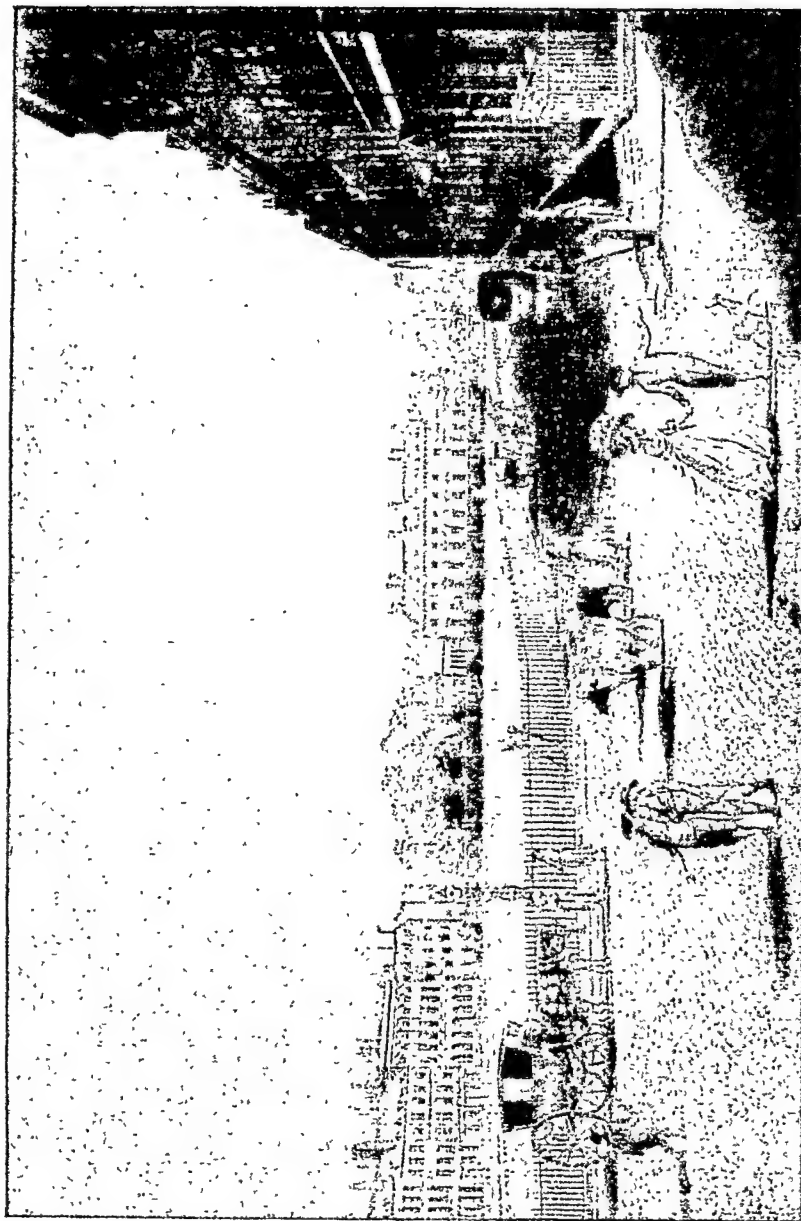
But a more thorough examination of this period reveals many signs which belie our first impression of a static society; indeed, this very century saw the origin of a change which has altered the entire nature of human occupations—the Industrial Revolution. Not only this, but in the eighteenth century Britain lost one empire and acquired the beginnings of another; she passed through a great religious revival; while from across the Channel the voice of the French Revolution came to challenge the accepted order of political thinking.

(i) The Industrial Revolution  
The use of machinery, which has so transformed our daily lives, was at first slow. John Kay invented his 'flying shuttle' for weaving in 1733, but it was another thirty years before Hargreaves made his spinning 'jenny' and fifty years before one of Watt's steam-engines was used in a cotton-mill.<sup>1</sup> At the same time that the new inventions gradually drew men, women, and children towards the new towns and the new factories, another change was coming over agricultural England. The 'improving landlords' of the eighteenth century were busy enclosing the old common fields; and hundreds of Enclosure Acts were passed, changing the face of much of the countryside beyond recognition.<sup>2</sup> The transformation from a rural to an urban society began in the last quarter of the eighteenth century and continued throughout the nineteenth; it is the greatest fact in modern history.

(ii) The Religious Revival  
The great change in industry took place about the same time as a religious revival which was very largely the work of one man—John Wesley. The Church of England, until Wesley's work influenced it, was content, on the whole, to leave the poor to their own devices—a course which might have been disastrous had not Wesley and his Methodists altered the whole religious outlook of England. The Wesley brothers and their first helpers were obstructed in their mission of preaching the Gospel to the poor by the interference of violent mobs. It

<sup>1</sup> See Chap. XXX, Section 2.

<sup>2</sup> See Chap. XXX, Section 1.



THE LEISURELY SIDE OF EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY LIFE

Bloomsbury Square, London, about 1780. Notice the hackney-coach waiting for a fare, and the cows being driven by a milkmaid.

was no orderly, civilized society which Wesley found in the growing industrial areas, but an ignorant, almost heathen population. The violence of these mobs, who turned with a will from baiting animals to baiting preachers, goes far to modify the picture of a peaceful Georgian England.

(iii) The  
Expansion  
of England

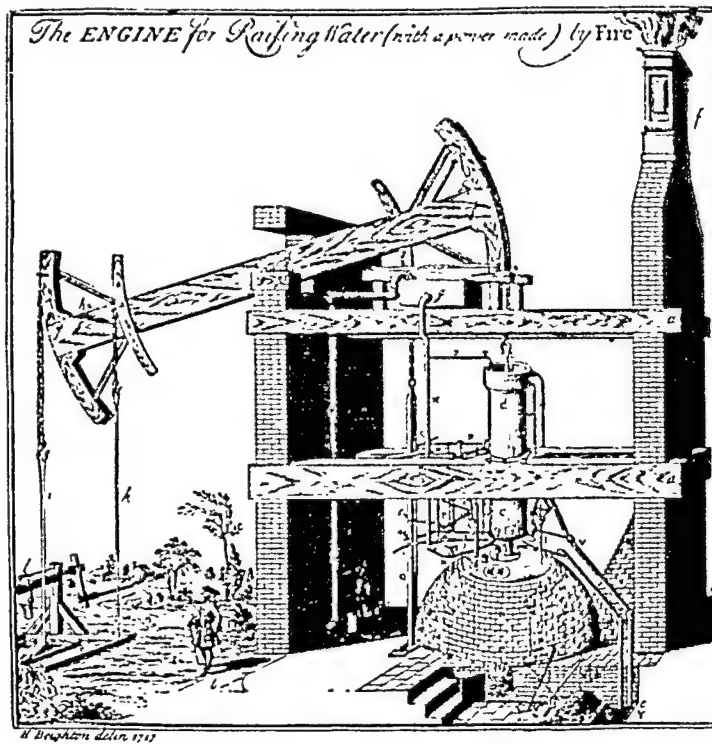
The reign of George III (1760-1820) witnessed the famous quarrel with the American Colonies, ending in the recognition of the independence of the United States (1783). But this loss of the bulk of our old Empire was balanced by the acquisition of other lands which were to develop into the modern British Commonwealth. The foundation of three of the present Dominions was laid in the period under review. Canada was conquered from the French (1763); Australian settlement was begun at Botany Bay (1788); and Cape Colony was acquired from the Dutch (1806). Further, under Clive, Warren Hastings, and Wellesley, Britain acquired the empire of India (1757-1805). The eighteenth century was the age of rival empires and wars for empire; and in this struggle Britain was the most fortunate competitor. The names of Clive and Wolfe, Rodney and Nelson, remind us that this was an age when great military and naval traditions were created; the century which opened with Marlborough and ended with Wellington was not one of peace. Of the 127 years from 1688 to 1815, 62 were years of peace, 65 years of war.<sup>1</sup>

(iv) The  
French  
Revolution

The last of these wars was ushered in by the tremendous upheaval known as the French Revolution. Though France later turned to military glory under Napoleon, the real work of the Revolution was to overthrow the old social system of France, and to change the existing order of society in other European countries. Though this change was violently resisted, in England as elsewhere, it began to take effect in the nineteenth century. The upholders of the old established order might still praise the 'Glorious Revolution', which had given England her orderly government, but the ideas which lay

<sup>1</sup> There was only one long interval of peace—the 26 years between the Treaty of Utrecht (1713) and the outbreak of the colonial struggle, first with Spain (1739) and then France. Even in the nominally peaceful years, there was often fighting in America and in India between British and French. See Chap. XXVII.

behind the watchwords, 'Liberty, Equality, Fraternity', were, in the next generation, to bear their fruit on the English side of the Channel. The French Revolution was the forerunner of modern democracy.



THE COMING OF STEAM

From the earliest known engraving (1717) of Newcomen's steam engine, used for raising water from mines.

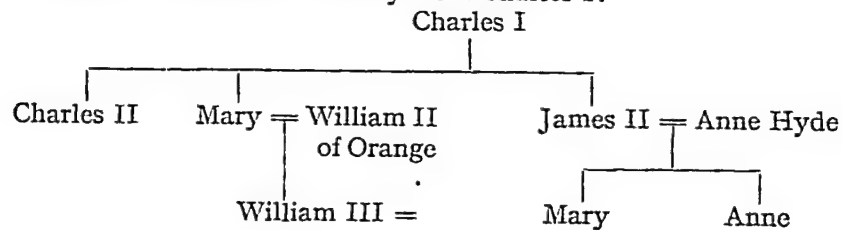
## WILLIAM AND MARY AND ANNE

I. *The Revolution Settlement*(a) *In England.*

AFTER the final departure of James II (Christmas 1688), the Prince of Orange issued letters summoning a Convention,<sup>1</sup> which met on 22 January 1689. The first business of this Convention was to settle the question who should be King of England. It was resolved that James II, 'having endeavoured to subvert the constitution of the kingdom by breaking the original contract between king and people, and by the advice of Jesuits and other wicked persons having violated the fundamental laws and withdrawn himself out of the kingdom, hath abdicated the government and the throne is thereby become vacant'. Many of the Tories still clung to the theory that James was divinely appointed, and therefore must be king as long as he was alive; they wished for a Regency ruling in his name. Lord Nottingham proposed that the Crown should go to Mary, James's elder daughter, with her husband, William of Orange, acting as Regent. But here William intervened; he flatly refused to rule in his wife's name. He would have the Crown or nothing—otherwise he would return to Holland. It was then decided to offer the Crown to William and Mary as joint sovereigns, and this offer was accepted (February 1689).<sup>2</sup> The offer of the Crown was accompanied by a Declaration of Rights, which became the Bill of Rights when passed by

<sup>1</sup> So called because not summoned by the Sovereign. (Compare the Convention of 1660.)

<sup>2</sup> Descent of William and Mary from Charles I:



the first Parliament of the new reign (1689). The passing of the Bill of Rights ended the long struggle which had been going on between King and Parliament all through the reigns of the Stuart kings. The struggle was decided in favour of Parliament, since William and Mary were offered, and accepted, the throne on Parliament's terms. The Bill of Rights limited the Sovereign's power in certain important directions:

The Bill of Rights  
1689

1. The 'pretended power' of suspending the laws by royal authority was declared to be illegal.<sup>1</sup>
2. The king should levy no money, except by grant of Parliament.
3. The king should not keep a standing army in time of peace without consent of Parliament.<sup>2</sup>
4. Parliament was to be free in its electing, and in its subjects of debate, and 'ought to be held frequently'.

The effect of the Bill was to make a royal despotism in England impossible; such is the foundation on which the constitutional monarchy of England rests. It was further declared that the King of England could not be a Roman Catholic or marry a person of that religion.

This 'Glorious Revolution' (1688-9), which determined the future political history of England, was accompanied by a step forward on the path of religious toleration. William of Orange was a Calvinist, and he refused to permit the continued persecution of Dissenters. By the Toleration Act (1689), Non-conformist congregations were allowed to worship in their own way, without interference from the law. They were not, however, admitted to a share in local or national government, from which their religion still debarred them; the Corporation Act and the Test Act<sup>3</sup> remained unrepealed until the nineteenth

Toleration  
Act, 1689

<sup>1</sup> While the 'suspending power' (i.e. suspending a law altogether) was abolished, the 'dispensing power' (i.e. issuing dispensations to particular persons exempting them from the provisions of the law) was condemned 'as it hath been used of late'. This referred to James II's dispensations to Roman Catholics and Nonconformists.

<sup>2</sup> Mutiny Acts (now called Army Acts), allowing the king to keep an army for one year only, have been passed nearly every year since 1689.

<sup>3</sup> See above, pp. 493 and 498. It was the Tories who insisted, against the wishes of the king and the Whigs, in retaining these Acts on the Statute Book. But annual indemnity acts were soon passed.

century. Roman Catholics were not included in the Toleration Act, though in practice they were allowed to hold their own services in peace.

The Toleration Act was the work of King William, of the Whigs in Parliament, and of the more moderate Churchmen. There was, however, a considerable body of 'High Churchmen' who refused not only to accept the principles of toleration, but even to accept William as king. Six of the seven bishops who had refused to issue James II's Declaration of Indulgence<sup>1</sup> now refused to take the oath to King William, and they were followed by 400 of the clergy. They were therefore deprived of their sees and benefices, and formed a separate sect of their own, known as the Non-Jurors, which lasted for some generations. Their departure paved the way for the promotion of 'Low Churchmen', who disliked all forms of religious enthusiasm, and who became the typical English church dignitaries of the eighteenth century.

The Non-Jurors William III was never loved in England. Unlike his uncle Charles II, he did not understand the art of making himself personally popular—and he would have scorned to do so even if he had. He knew quite well that his presence in England was regarded as a disagreeable necessity, but he did not allow the fact to disturb his mind or interfere with his plans. His aims were magnificent, but his heart was cold; he was a stoic in the tradition of the ancient heroes of Greece and Rome, and the ideal of duty ruled his life. The affection which William failed, or scorned, to inspire among his subjects was given to his kind-hearted wife, Mary (died 1694).

Character of William III The main object of William's life, in pursuit of which he had accepted the Crown of England, was to overthrow the power of Louis XIV. The first eight years of his reign in England were spent in a war against France. William used the power of England as a means to accomplish his European aims; beyond that he had little interest in this country. He did not trust English politicians, and with good reason, for nearly all of them—Whigs as well as Tories—kept in touch with the Court of St. Germain, where James was living. They regarded William as a stop-gap, and always bore in mind that another

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 507.



turn of Fortune's wheel might bring back the exiled James. King William, therefore, naturally gave his chief confidence to his own Dutchmen, and particularly to William Bentinck, whom he made Earl of Portland.

The king himself was at the head of the government, and he kept the direction of foreign affairs entirely in his own hands. But, since he was dependent on Parliament both for men and money, he had to work with English politicians. The government was not then formed, as it is now, generally from the party which could command a majority in the House of Commons. William chose his first ministers from both parties; many of them were Whigs, but the chief minister was a Tory—Danby, Charles II's old Treasurer. As the war proceeded, however, William found that he could work better with the Whigs, who were more deeply interested in the Revolution Settlement than their rivals. And neither the king nor the Whigs forgot that, if England lost the war, the restoration of James II by French arms was a probability.

It was to guard against any such restoration of the old line that Parliament passed the Act of Settlement (1701). Since Queen Mary was dead, the heir to William's throne was his sister-in-law, the Princess Anne. The Act of Settlement declared, not only that Anne should succeed William, but that if she should die without direct heirs,<sup>1</sup> the Crown should pass to the Dowager Electress of Hanover, a grand-daughter of James I, and her descendants.<sup>2</sup> The Act of Settlement, which thus ensured the succession of the House of Hanover and has given England her present line of kings, excluded James II (who died the same year) and his son from the throne. It was passed at a time when a further struggle between England and Louis XIV was about to break out.

Act of  
Settlement  
1701

(b) *In Scotland.*

The results of the Revolution were no less important in Scotland. A Convention was held at Edinburgh, and a resolution was passed called the 'Claim of Right', corresponding to the

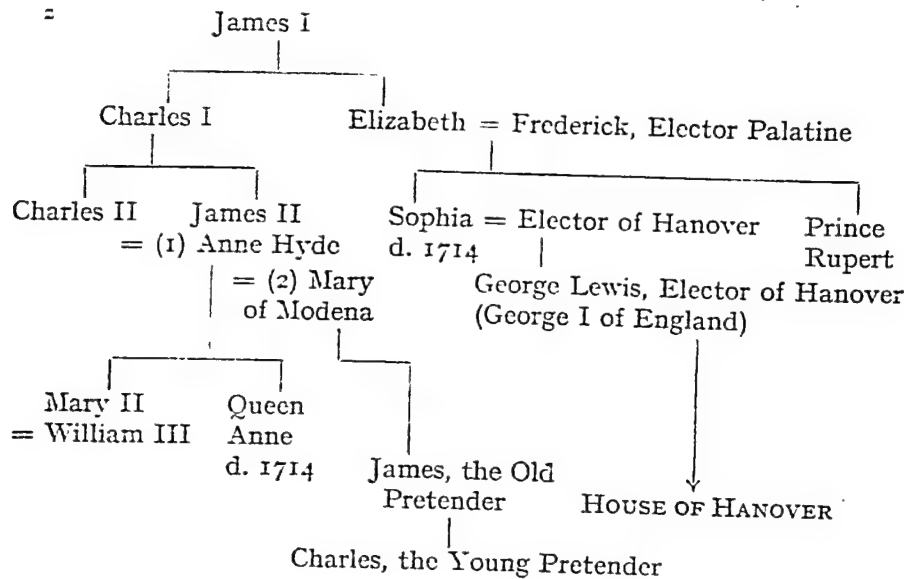
<sup>1</sup> Anne had had a large family; but her only remaining child, the Duke of Gloucester, had just died (1700).

<sup>2</sup> For note 2 see next page.

Declaration of Rights in England. James VII (James II of England), the last of the long line of Stuart kings of Scotland, was declared to have forfeited the Crown, which was offered to William and Mary. The expulsion of the ancient line, however, did not suit the Highlanders, many of whom rose in a last rally for King James under John Graham of Claverhouse, Viscount Dundee. 'Bonny Dundee' won a battle over the Lowlanders and English in the Pass of Killiecrankie (1689), but he himself fell in the hour of victory. After this the Highlanders dispersed and came to terms. It was agreed that all the clans should take the oath of allegiance by the first day of the year 1692. All did so except the chief of the Macdonalds of Glencoe, who was delayed by accident. Sir John Dalrymple, a Secretary of State, induced William (who was in Holland) to punish the clan—'to extirpate that sept (clan) of thieves!' One hundred and twenty men of Argyll's regiment under Robert Campbell of Glenlyon were chosen as the instruments of punishment, and were sent to the Glencoe valley, where for a fortnight they were entertained as guests. One morning they treacherously rose up and attacked their hosts: the chief and thirty-seven of his clan were butchered—the rest escaped to the hills. The responsibility for this savage deed must be attributed partly to the customary feuds of the High-

Battle of  
Killie-  
crankie  
1689

Massacre of  
Glencoe  
1693



land chiefs and partly to the Government. The Jacobites denounced the crime at home and abroad.

A few years later Scotland suffered severe loss by the failure of the unfortunate Darien Scheme. Several London merchants formed a plan for promoting Scottish colonization in Africa or the Indies; the plan was enthusiastically taken up in Edinburgh, where the Scottish Parliament passed a Bill setting up the Company of Scotland Trading to Africa and the Indies (1695). But the English Parliament, jealous for the monopoly of the East India Company, was hostile, whereupon the London Scottish merchants grew alarmed and dropped the scheme. But the Edinburgh merchants persisted, and large sums of money were subscribed in Scotland, in what amounted to a national effort to promote Scottish colonization. Darien, near Panama, was eventually chosen as the place for a colony; it was intended to establish an overland trade-route across the isthmus, connecting the Atlantic and Pacific. But it was an unfortunate choice, for the Spaniards were bound to object, and King William was then conducting delicate negotiations on the future of the Spanish Empire.<sup>1</sup> It was impossible for him to countenance the Darien colony or to defend an enterprise undertaken against his wishes. Three expeditions were, however, sent out (1698-9); all ended in disaster, and the would-be colonists were at last forced, owing to Spanish hostility and the bad climate, to give up the enterprise. The shareholders lost practically all the money they had invested. Somewhat unfairly they blamed England for the failure of an adventure they should never have undertaken.

The Darien  
Scheme  
1695-9

In spite of this incident, the reign of William and Mary was on the whole a happy one in Scottish history. The king determined to put an end to the long religious struggle which had begun when Archbishop Laud had tried to impose the Anglican Prayer Book and organization on Scotland. The important thing was to allow the Scots to organize their own religion without interference from England; the Presbyterian Kirk was therefore set up as the national church of Scotland. The fondness of the Scots for disputes over minor points of doctrine led to several secessions from the established Presbyterian Kirk

Establish-  
ment of the  
Presby-  
terian Kirk  
1690

<sup>1</sup> See below, p. 563.

during the eighteenth century, e.g. the Cameronians and the Original Seceders.<sup>1</sup>

Scotland had now, for the first time since the Reformation, a national, democratically governed Kirk, the choice of her own people. The Scottish Parliament, too, was freer from English control than at any time since 1603. But its independence lasted only eighteen years. English statesmen began to feel that a closer union between England and Scotland was desirable. This feeling was increased after the passing of the Act of Settlement (1701) at Westminster, for the Scottish Parliament passed no such act. The Scots accepted Anne as queen, but it was by no means certain that they would accept the Hanoverians.<sup>2</sup> As long as the Parliament remained independent of Westminster, it was free to pass its own laws, and might even call back the Stuarts. After long negotiations, the Act of Union was passed (1707) both at London and Edinburgh, and the Scottish Parliament came to an end. The Scots were allowed 45 members in the Commons and 16 peers in the Lords in the United Parliament of Great Britain. They were also allowed to keep their own Kirk and their own law courts. Above all, free trade between the two countries was established.

Scotland prospered after the Union, for her trading towns were now allowed free competition with those of England. In education, too, Scotland was for long far ahead of England, and schools were set up in every parish. Scotsmen, as is well known, have taken a great share in building up the British Empire, and in business they are frequently to be found in the best positions.

(c) *In Ireland.*

The Revolution, called 'Glorious' in England, was given no such name in Ireland. Here the Catholic majority made a great effort to undo the results of a century of oppression, and threw in their lot with the Catholic James II. James landed at

<sup>1</sup> The Secession Church split into the Burghers and the Anti-Burghers, and these again into the Auld Licht and New Licht Burghers and the Auld Licht and New Licht Anti-Burghers.

<sup>2</sup> In 1703 the Scottish Parliament passed a Security Act, claiming the right to choose their own sovereign—not necessarily the same person as the English sovereign—on the death of Anne.

Kinsale (1689) and began a war against the Protestants of Ulster. The Orangemen—as the Ulster supporters of William of Orange were called—defended Londonderry after James had overrun the rest of the country. The siege of Londonderry lasted fifteen weeks and the inhabitants were reduced to the last extremities of hunger. But at last an English ship broke the boom which had been placed across the River Foyle, and supplies were brought in (1689).

Siege of  
Londonderry, 1689

Next year William landed in Ireland. He defeated James's army of Irish and Frenchmen at the Battle of the Boyne (1690), a turning-point in the history of the British Isles. James himself was one of the first to quit the field and he immediately took ship for France. Deserted by their king after the first blow had been struck, the unfortunate Irish were left to the doubtful mercy of William, which meant that the country was reduced to starvation and surrender. The last town to hold out was Limerick, which was gallantly defended by Patrick Sarsfield until the autumn of 1691. Then a treaty was signed by which the defenders agreed to surrender Limerick on condition that the Irish Catholics should enjoy as much liberty as they had done under Charles II.

Battle of the  
Boyne, 1690

Siege of  
Limerick  
1691

But the Treaty of Limerick was shamefully broken. King William himself was anxious to carry out its terms and to treat the Catholics fairly. But the English Parliament was highly intolerant, and in 1691 passed a law that only Protestants could sit in the Irish Parliament. This sealed the fate of the Catholics, whose existence was made miserable by a harsh Penal Code, begun under William and Mary, and continued under Queen Anne. By this Code Catholics were forbidden to sit not only in Parliament but on juries; they could not serve in the army, or on town councils, or enter the teaching profession. They could not buy land, and when one of the existing Catholic landowners died, his property did not descend to his heir, but had to be split up among all his children.

It must be noted that the Protestant minority were genuinely afraid of a repetition of the Catholic Rebellion of 1641, or of the Civil War of 1689—of two religious wars in one generation. But even the Protestants of Ulster, who had fought for King William, were badly treated. Most of them were Dissenters,

The Penal  
and Com-  
mercial  
Laws

and they were not permitted to share in the religious toleration now granted to England and Scotland. To add to the sum of Irish misery, the Commercial Code, designed to favour England at Ireland's expense, was increased in severity. The Irish cattle trade had already been ruined by an Act of Charles II's Parliament;<sup>1</sup> now it was the turn of the Irish wool trade. The export of wool to any country except England was prohibited, and from England the wool was largely kept out by high tariffs (1699).

No Englishman can read without shame this unworthy passage in our history. The broken treaty of Limerick, the harsh and mean laws, were bad enough. But the complete lack of any sense of responsibility towards the conquered race was worse. Had the policy of the English in Ireland been followed elsewhere, there would have been no British Empire to-day.

## 2. *William III and Louis XIV*

The ambitions of Louis XIV form the central theme of European history in the second half of the seventeenth century. Louis had, in the course of a long series of wars, seized large slices of the Spanish Netherlands and nearly ruined Holland by his invasion of 1672. His further designs threatened both Holland and Germany. Already, by the seizure of Alsace (1681), the French frontier had reached the Rhine; Louis' troops had also occupied Lorraine. The Emperor and the German princes were seriously alarmed; they formed an alliance known as the League of Augsburg (1686) with the object of opposing any further French advance eastward. This alliance was joined by William of Orange, as Stadtholder of Holland, before he became King of England.

The European situation was entirely altered by the Revolution in England which overthrew James II and set William and Mary on the throne. The long English subservience to France, which had lasted for twenty years under Charles II and his brother, was broken at last. Instead of the Stuarts, Louis was confronted with the first statesman in Europe seated on the English throne; William of Orange was at last in a

<sup>1</sup> See above, Chap. XXIII.

# The Relief of London-Derry;

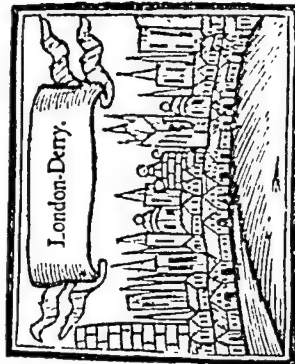
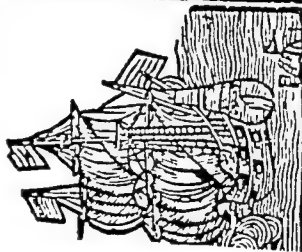
OR, THE

Happy Arrival of the Timely Succours Landed at London-Derry,  
by the Prudent Care and Conduct of

Major General Kirk,

To the unspeakable Joy of the Besieged.

To the Tune of, The Song of London-Derry. Entered according to Act.



O'er the water's edge  
 With an honest thankful heart,  
 If the tidings which we hear,  
 Be truly true, we need not fear.

London-Derry, now at last,  
 Is in hopes the worst is past,  
 For God has all things done,  
 It now may be secure and safe.

How great a joy Kirk was told,  
 He could not much longer hold,  
 He a noble general,  
 For that fact would honour all.

When he heard Captain Stewart,  
 Who the fate of such friends,  
 And that he no longer Derry sail,  
 Surrender with a pleasant tale.

The Duke Swallow gallantly,  
 With three sail in company,  
 Ready to march on Belfast,  
 With food and ammunition sent.

Another Captain then arrived,  
 And told him where the Dartmouth lay,  
 For which he instantly did send,  
 The General's friends to defend.



When to Kilmore Castle the  
 General was, for Derry, sent,  
 Where the Dartmouth's guns did roar,  
 And the King's troops were sent.

The Dartmouth's talents Captain Leake,  
 Of the Duke's service he was great,  
 For he had a plan to win,  
 That was of more worth than a shell.

For while the soldiers were at rest,  
 The Duke's troops were at the post,  
 The King's boat of the swallow too,  
 All went to sea through the post.

When the Duke's boats of the Duke,  
 Came to the Duke's boats of the Duke,  
 And the Duke's boats of the Duke,  
 Put on the Duke's boats of the Duke.

To save the Duke's boats of the Duke,  
 The Duke's boats of the Duke,  
 And the Duke's boats of the Duke,  
 The Duke's boats of the Duke.

Host of all positions then  
 Landed was, for Derry, sent,  
 For the Duke's troops were sent,  
 And the Duke's troops were sent.

When the Duke's boats of the Duke,  
 Of the Duke's boats of the Duke,  
 And the Duke's boats of the Duke,  
 The Duke's boats of the Duke.

When the Duke's boats of the Duke,  
 Of the Duke's boats of the Duke,  
 And the Duke's boats of the Duke,  
 The Duke's boats of the Duke.

When the Duke's boats of the Duke,  
 Of the Duke's boats of the Duke,  
 And the Duke's boats of the Duke,  
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When the Duke's boats of the Duke,  
 Of the Duke's boats of the Duke,  
 And the Duke's boats of the Duke,  
 The Duke's boats of the Duke.

## THE RELIEF OF LONDON-DERRY

A contemporary broadside.

position to face his arch-enemy on equal terms. Part of Louis' object in fighting the Anglo-Dutch-German combination was therefore to dethrone William and restore James. It was this fact that made the English fight for their little-loved king.

King William stood at the head of the European alliance against France—England, Holland, and Spain leagued with the Emperor and the German princes. This War of the League of Augsburg lasted eight years (1689-97). It was fought on all the French frontiers, at sea, in Ireland, and in the colonies of North America. The first two years were occupied in James II's ill-fated attempt to win England through Ireland; but the Battle of the Boyne ended the attempt as far as he was concerned. In 1692 Louis prepared a fleet to invade England; James went down to La Hogue to embark with it. But the Dutch and English fleets—the English under Admiral Russell—scattered the French in the Channel; the battle of Barfleur ended all chance of an invasion of England (1692). For the rest of the war French commerce suffered severely from English and Dutch attacks. Not for the first or the last time, the command of the sea settled the fate of England.

Next to the command of the sea, our most important object was to secure control of the Low Countries. It has always been one of the cardinal principles of English policy to prevent the Low Countries—Holland and Belgium—from falling into the hands of a hostile power. For this object we fought later on against the First French Republic and Napoleon; for this object we fought the Germans in the Great War. In 1689 both England and Holland were determined that Louis XIV should not conquer the Spanish Netherlands—Belgium. King William therefore crossed to Belgium year by year, and fought a series of campaigns against the French generals. English soldiers fought in the Flanders mud as their ancestors had done under Henry V and as their descendants were to do under George V. The French won several battles, but William was always skilful enough to retreat with most of his army intact. His principal success was the capture of the fortress of Namur (1695).

It was the waging of King William's war against Louis XIV which brought about a financial revolution in English history. One of the main causes of the former quarrels between English

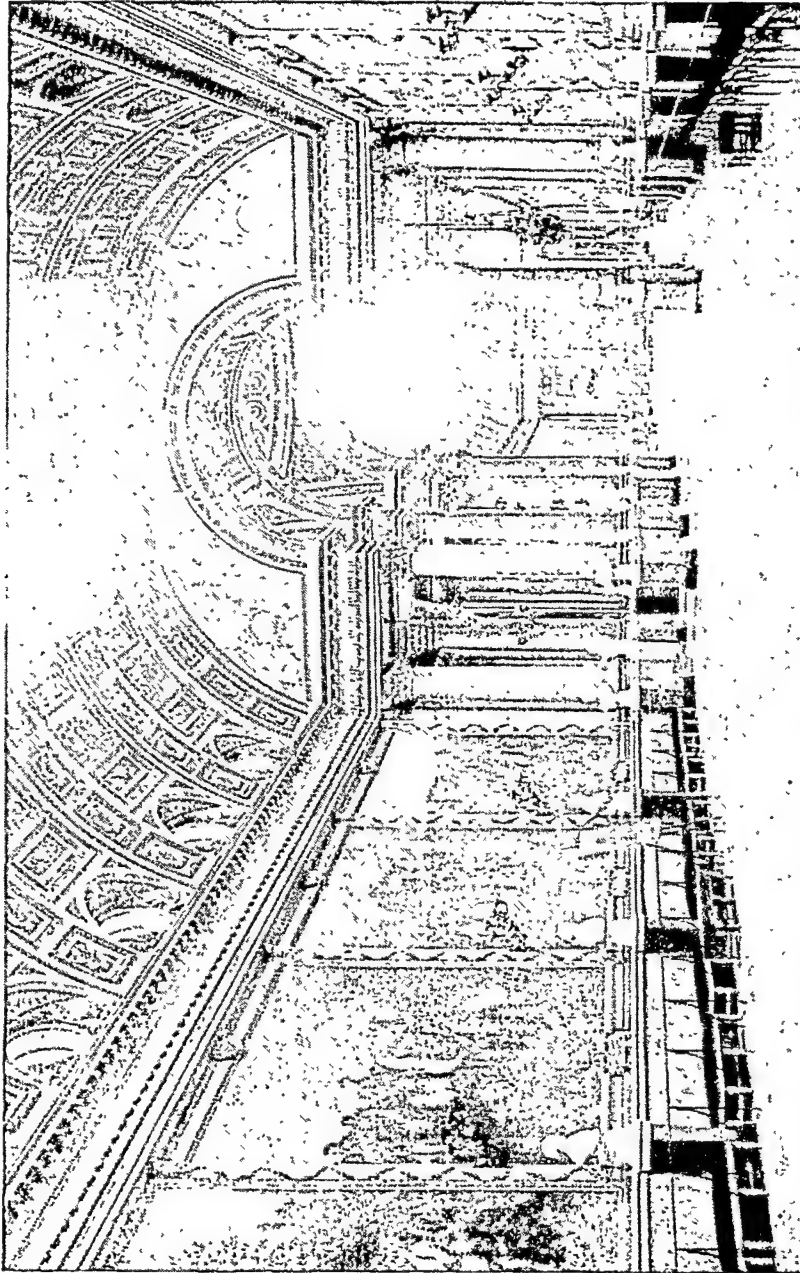
War of the  
League of  
Augsburg  
1689-97

Battle of  
Barfleur  
1692

The Low  
Countries

The War  
and the  
National  
Debt





'GALERIE DES BATAILLES' IN LOUIS XIV'S GREAT PALACE OF VERSAILLES

kings and their Parliaments had been the question of taxation. Since war is always more expensive than peace, war had always meant fresh taxation. The Whig statesmen, Sir John Somers and Charles Montagu, now hit upon the plan of making posterity pay for wars. The National Debt, which has been chiefly incurred in waging war, is not a debt which has to be settled by one generation; the banking system which the Whigs began under William III carries the Debt on from one generation to another. The ministry of William III obtained funds—in the first instance, £1,200,000—by establishing a company to lend money to the Government. This company was the Bank of England, founded in 1694. The Bank at first borrowed money from the public at 2½ per cent., and lent it to the Government at 8 per cent. Founded, therefore, as a Whig expedient for paying for the war, the Bank soon established itself in the national confidence. Its credit, even in the worst days of the Napoleonic War, has never since been seriously shaken.

Founding  
of the Bank  
of England  
1694

By 1697 both sides were anxious for peace, which was accordingly concluded at Ryswick, near The Hague. For the first time Louis emerged from a war without making any fresh conquests. He agreed to allow the Dutch to maintain garrisons in the Barrier Fortresses (e.g. Namur, Ypres, Menin) in the Spanish Netherlands. He also recognized William III as King of England. In America the English restored Acadie to the French in return for Fort Albany which the French had taken from the Hudson's Bay Company.

Treaty of  
Ryswick  
1697

No sooner was this peace concluded than Europe was faced with the problem of the succession to the Spanish throne. Charles II of Spain (1665–1700) was the last of the Hapsburg kings of Spain and he had no children. The question of the succession to his throne involved large issues—who should be the next King of Spain, and what would happen to the vast Spanish Empire at his death. Charles had two sisters; the elder had married Louis XIV, the younger the Emperor Leopold I.<sup>1</sup> If either Louis or Leopold should claim to succeed Charles, the balance of power in Europe would be upset; it was

The  
Spanish  
Succession  
Question

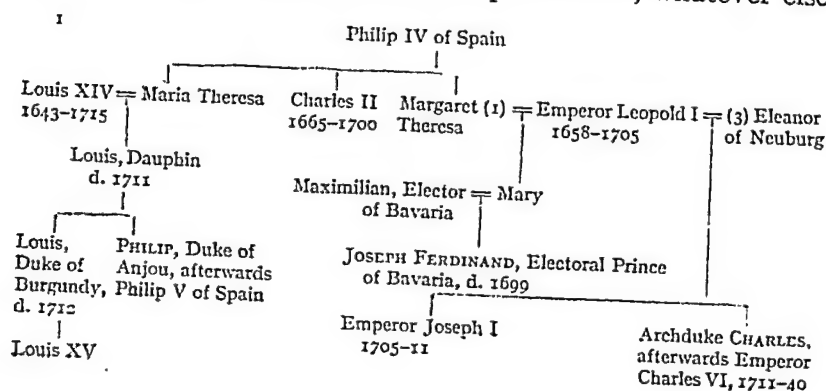
<sup>1</sup> The elder sister, Louis' wife, had renounced her rights to the Spanish throne at the time of her marriage. But the French Court questioned whether this renunciation was binding on her descendants.

unthinkable that the union of France and Spain, or of Spain and Austria, could be brought about without war. Both Louis and Leopold were willing, however, to renounce their claims to the Spanish Empire, each in favour of another member of his own family. The Austrian candidate was the Emperor's younger son, the Archduke Charles; Louis proposed one of his own grandsons. Another claimant was Joseph Ferdinand, Electoral Prince of Bavaria; he was by far the most suitable candidate for he was not in the line of succession to the Imperial throne (see Table).<sup>1</sup> Had he become King of Spain, the succession of either a French or an Austrian claimant would have been avoided. Louis was willing to agree to the Bavarian's taking the Spanish Crown, provided France was given some compensation. He therefore signed the First Partition Treaty (1698) recognizing Joseph Ferdinand as heir to the Spanish throne and dominions, except Naples and Sicily, which were to go to France. Then, unfortunately, the Electoral Prince died of small-pox (1699).

First  
Partition  
Treaty  
1698

Louis was not anxious to embark on another war for the sake of the Spanish inheritance. He therefore agreed to a Second Partition Treaty (1699)—which William III arranged in the interests of peace—recognizing the Austrian Archduke as heir to Spain; France was to be compensated with Naples, Sicily, and Milan. But there were two objections to this treaty. First, the Emperor Leopold would not sign it, but claimed the whole Spanish inheritance for his son. Secondly, the Spanish ministers would have none of it; they were determined that the Spanish Empire should not be partitioned, whatever else

Second  
Partition  
Treaty  
1699



happened. This determination they now conveyed to the feeble mind of the King of Spain.

Charles II  
of Spain

Charles II of Spain had been a semi-imbecile since boyhood. Macaulay, in a well-known passage of his *History*, has described the last days of this wretched man.

'That he was too weak to lift his food to his misshapen mouth, that, at thirty-seven, he had the bald head and wrinkled face of a man of seventy, that his complexion was turning from yellow to green—these were no longer the worst symptoms of his malady. He had always been afraid of ghosts and demons; and it had long been necessary that three friars should watch every night by his restless bed to guard against hobgoblins. But now he was firmly convinced that he was bewitched, that there was a devil within him, that there were devils all around him.'

His Will  
and Death  
1700

It was this poor king who was now induced to make a will naming Louis' grandson Philip of Anjou as the inheritor of all his dominions, so that the Spanish Empire should remain undivided. Having done this, the unfortunate man expired (1700).

Louis  
accepts the  
Will

The news of Charles's death and will came as a thunderbolt to European statesmen. Louis decided to throw over the agreement made in the Second Partition Treaty, especially as it had not been approved by the Emperor, and to accept the will. The French Court was assembled at Versailles; the king was closeted with his grandson. At length the doors were thrown open; Louis appeared leaning on Philip's arm. 'Messieurs,' he said, 'voici le roi d'Espagne!'

William III  
and  
Marl-  
borough

Louis' decision led to war. Neither England nor Austria would permit the whole Spanish Empire to pass to Philip, even though that prince renounced his right to succeed to the French throne. William III was a sick man, but he braced himself for one final effort. He knew that he himself would not live to wage the war which he was preparing; he looked round for a man to take his place. With unerring instinct he chose the one person in England capable of carrying on his task; he chose a man who had long been his personal enemy, and whom he had often suspected of treason against him—John Churchill, Earl of Marlborough. Marlborough was the chief adherent of

<sup>1</sup> Macaulay, *History of England*, Chapter XXIV.

the heiress to the throne, the Princess Anne, whose bosom friend was Sarah Churchill, Marlborough's wife. Anne and Lady Marlborough hated King William, whom they always referred to as 'Mr. Caliban', though since Queen Mary's death they had become more reconciled to him. William now showed, against all expectation, that he trusted Marlborough. He sent him as English minister to Holland, charged with the task of forming a Grand Alliance with the Dutch and the Emperor against France. Marlborough succeeded in his task. His wonderful charm of manner well fitted him for the task of ambassador; he stepped into the place William had prepared for him as the chief representative of England. In September 1701 the Treaty of the Grand Alliance was signed, and William's work was done.

Treaty of  
the Grand  
Alliance  
1701

A week later James II died at St. Germain. Louis immediately recognized his son (known to English history as the Old Pretender) as James III of England. It was a foolish act, for it united England against him. Parliament had already passed the Act of Settlement settling the Crown on Anne,<sup>1</sup> and after her on the House of Hanover; and Englishmen were not going to allow Louis XIV to dictate to them who their king should be. Besides, Louis' actions were most alarming; his troops had occupied the Spanish Netherlands and driven the Dutch garrisons from the Barrier Fortresses. War was now inevitable.

Death of  
James II  
1701

Just before it broke out William died. While he was out riding his horse stumbled and threw him, and he broke his collarbone. A chill followed—more than the feeble frame of the sick king could endure. His passing was unmourned, for England had not loved him, though he had laboured for her good. He died, and Anne succeeded—as the roll of Marlborough's drums heralded what was, up till then, the greatest war in British history.

Death of  
William III  
1702

### 3. *Marlborough*

Queen Anne, the younger daughter of James II and Anne Hyde, was the last of the Stuart sovereigns of England. She was a simple-minded, pious woman, married to a nonentity, Prince George of Denmark. She had been the mother of a large family, but all her children, except one who had reached the

Queen  
Anne

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 554.

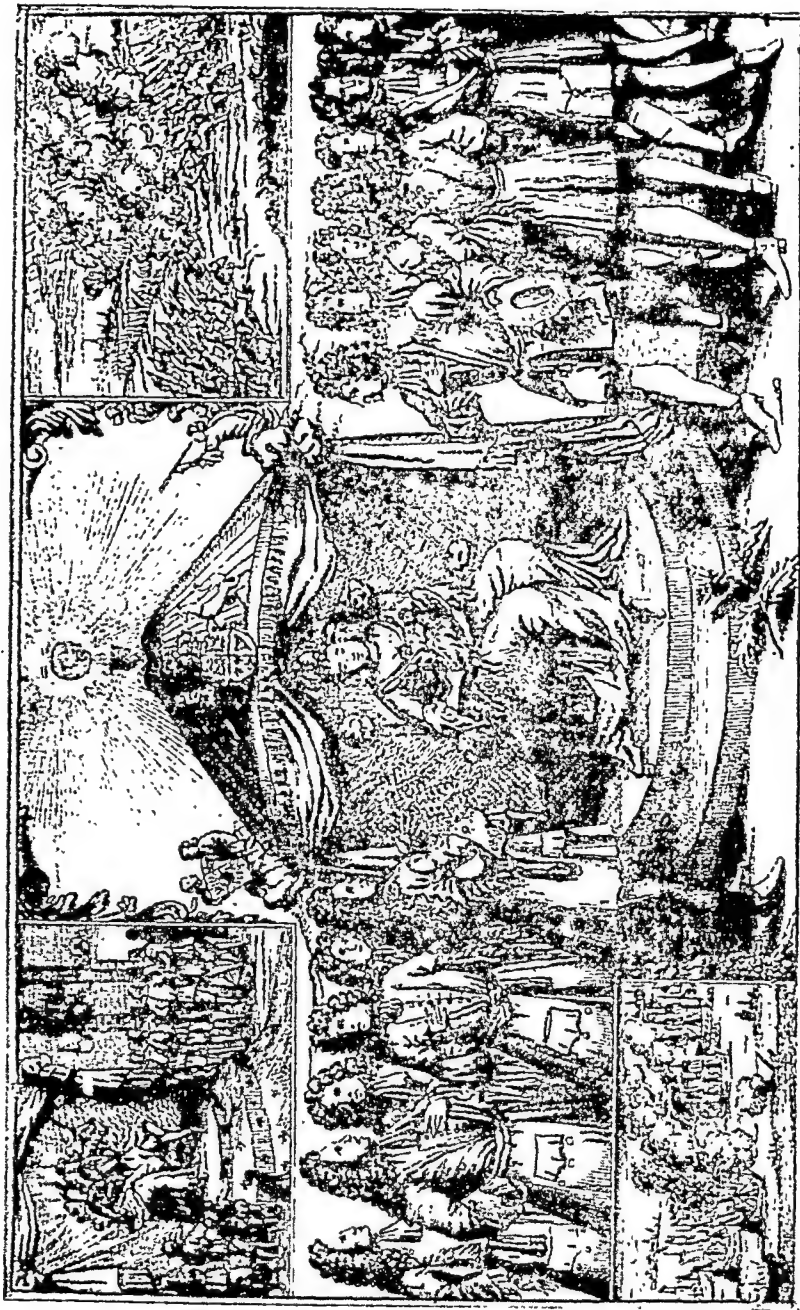
age of twelve, had died in infancy. Her reign, so glorious in English history, was not a happy time for Anne herself, for she lived the life of an invalid, and was seldom free from pain.

For the greater part of her reign Anne was completely under the influence of the Churchills—Marlborough and his sharp-tempered wife. The duke, as he became in 1702, was now over fifty, but only on the threshold of his great career. The son of a West-country squire, Sir Winston Churchill, he had won a name for himself in the witty, heartless court of Charles II. But his marriage to Sarah Jennings was a love match; Marlborough and his duchess were a devoted couple, and the duke's first action after the battle of Blenheim was to pen a hasty note to his faithful Sarah. As a soldier, Marlborough was the first Englishman of his time. To his men he was all that a general should be; he looked after their well-being, and he led them in battles, and these he knew how to win. His soldiers loved 'Corporal John', but politicians were not so grateful. The duke's charm of manner was no proof against political hatred and, when once his enemies had undermined his influence with the queen, it proved easy to ruin him.

Godolphin The head of the war ministry was Sidney, Lord Godolphin, a close personal friend and relation of the duke.<sup>1</sup> Godolphin became Lord Treasurer, and was for eight years (1702-10) Prime Minister in all but name. The choice of ministers depended on personal devotion to Marlborough and Godolphin; the ministry began as mainly Tory, and ended as almost entirely Whig. It was the Tories who brought about its fall.

War of the Spanish Succession 1702-13 The War of the Spanish Succession, on which Great Britain was now embarking, was fought on four fronts—in Europe, in America, in the Atlantic, and in the Mediterranean. For this war France and Spain may be considered as one country, like Germany and Austria in the Great War. French armies occupied the Spanish Netherlands and accompanied Louis' grandson to Spain, where he was enthroned as Philip V. The war in Europe may be divided into four parts: the conquest of the Spanish Netherlands by Marlborough; the attempt of the French to subdue south Germany and reach Vienna; the fighting in

<sup>1</sup> Godolphin's son Francis married Henrietta Churchill, the duke's elder daughter.



#### THE WAR OF THE SPANISH SUCCESSION

A contemporary print showing Anne on her throne, clipping the wings of the French cock. Behind her the sun (emblem of Louis XIV) is in eclipse. The three inset pictures represent the court of Louis, the battle of Ramillies, and the defeat of the French fleet near Malaga in 1704.



north Italy, where the Duke of Savoy joined the allies; and the attempt of the allies to wrest Spain from Philip V.

When Marlborough took command in 1702 the French were in possession of the whole of the Spanish Netherlands. The Anglo-Dutch army faced them, and Marlborough began his attack. His operations in the first two years (1702-3) were along the rivers Meuse and Rhine; he held the line of the Rhine as far as Bonn, but did not advance far into the Spanish Netherlands. Meanwhile the Emperor was in a precarious position; his Hungarian subjects were in revolt,<sup>1</sup> and his great general, Prince Eugène, had been defeated by the French in Italy. Worse still, the French had persuaded the Elector of Bavaria to join them, and were preparing to march through south Germany to Vienna.

Campaign  
of 1704

The Emperor appealed to Marlborough, who, seeing that Austria must be saved if the war was to be won, decided to withdraw the bulk of his forces from the Rhine to the Danube. In June and July 1704 he moved by swift marches across Germany; the French had begun their march through Bavaria. On the night of 12 August Marlborough lay at Münster, on the Danube, in command of a mixed army of English (9,000), Dutch, and Germans. He had joined forces with the Imperial army under Prince Eugène; the combined allied forces numbered 52,000. The French and Bavarians, whose numbers were about equal to those of their opponents, were encamped behind the marshes of the little brook Nebel, which flows into the Danube at Blenheim. The French commander, Marshal Tallard, thought himself secure; his right flank rested on the Danube, his left on a forest. He did not imagine that Marlborough would dare to attack him by crossing the marshes of the Nebel.

The battle of Blenheim began the next day (13 August 1704) on a front four miles long. Marlborough waited all the morning for Prince Eugène to get into position opposite the French left; in the meantime his own men were constructing

<sup>1</sup> The Emperor had recently conquered Hungary from the Turks. The Austrians won the battle of Mohacs (1687), and the Turks later surrendered Hungary by treaty (1699). Hungary was ruled by the Hapsburg monarchs till 1918.



bridges to cross the Nebel. Then, in the afternoon, they crossed, and he gave the signal for attack. The village of Blenheim was surrounded, and a large number of French were engaged in its defence. Then Marlborough ordered a cavalry charge, and the French centre gave way. Except for the Bavarians on the left, who retired in good order, the retreat became a rout; the French fled in headlong confusion, and hundreds were drowned in the Danube. The defenders of Blenheim village surrendered and Marshal Tallard himself was captured, together with 10,000 prisoners. The results of Blenheim were overwhelming. Marlborough had won the greatest English victory since Agincourt; he had humbled the pride of Louis' famous army, saved Vienna, and cleared Germany of the French. His own losses were small, the number of English soldiers killed at Blenheim being only 672.

Battle of  
Blenheim,  
13 August  
1704

After pursuing the French across the Rhine, Marlborough returned to the Netherlands, where he fought six campaigns in the following six years. The campaign of 1706 was another great triumph. He won the battle of Ramillies and occupied Antwerp and Brussels. In 1708 he surprised the French at Oudenarde and drove them across the frontier. Lille fell, and the road to Paris was open. The next year (1709) he beat the enemy, though at great cost, at Malplaquet, and took Mons. But the French resistance was hardening; they had lost the Spanish Netherlands, but they were still capable of defending their own frontier.

The Belgian  
campaigns

Meanwhile the allies had carried the war into Spain itself. A week before Blenheim, Sir George Rooke, in command of an English fleet, appeared off Gibraltar. The fortress had been left practically unguarded; a few English sailors climbed the Rock, and Gibraltar surrendered. This was by far the most important English success of the war; the command of the Straits of Gibraltar gave the British the entry into the Mediterranean, and paved the way for their future control of Egypt and the Red Sea. In 1708 this success was followed up by the capture of Minorca, one of the Balearic Islands.

Capture of  
Gibraltar  
1704

and of  
Minorca  
1708

Two years after the fall of Gibraltar a British expedition under the Earl of Peterborough, accompanied by the Archduke Charles, passed through the Straits and sailed up the

The War in Spain Spanish coast. A landing was made near Barcelona; the city was stormed and taken. The province of Catalonia, of which Barcelona is the capital, now declared for Charles III, as the Archduke called himself. The Catalans have ever been a difficult people to rule, and have often given trouble to Spanish governments. Their defection now caused the Franco-Spanish armies to be drawn towards eastern Spain. Consequently another British army, assisted by the Portuguese,<sup>1</sup> was able to advance from Lisbon (1706). Then the French rallied, and under the Duke of Berwick<sup>2</sup> they completely routed the allies at the battle of Almanza (1707). After this all Spain, except Catalonia, which still held out, was lost to 'Charles III'. The allied attempt to impose on the Spanish people a sovereign not of their own choice had failed.

Battle of  
Almanza  
1707

#### 4. *Queen Anne and the Tories*

The final stages of the War of the Spanish Succession, and the events leading up to a general peace, were determined by a change which took place in the government of England.

Godolphin's Government, which supplied Marlborough with money for the war, became in time a wholly Party ministry consisting entirely of Whigs. But the dismissal of the Tory ministers, Robert Harley and Henry St. John (1708), proved to be the undoing of the Government. Both these men were ambitious schemers, and plotted the overthrow of Godolphin and Marlborough. Harley had a cousin, Mrs. Masham, whom he introduced into the royal circle with the object of undermining the influence of the Duchess of Marlborough. Then, in 1710, a political storm arose over a sermon preached in St. Paul's Cathedral by Dr. Sacheverell on the subject of toleration and the right of resistance. The ministry impeached Sacheverell for appearing to question the legality of the 'Glorious

Harley and  
St. John in  
opposition

Dr. Sache-  
verell

<sup>1</sup> The Portuguese had signed the Methuen Treaty (1703) by which they became the allies of England. There was a commercial side to this treaty; Portuguese wine (port) was to be given a preference in England over that of France.

<sup>2</sup> Berwick was one of the ablest generals in the French service. He was an illegitimate son of James II and Arabella Churchill, Marlborough's sister.

Revolution'. Immediately the cry 'The Church in danger' was raised; London mobs and Tory pamphlet writers combined to attack, in their different ways, the now unpopular ministry. Sacheverell was condemned by a small majority of the House of Lords, and sentenced merely to three years suspension from preaching. Such a sentence was almost as good as an acquittal, and the doctor's supporters went wild with delight.

Encouraged by the temper of the public, Harley decided to strike at his enemies. He persuaded the queen to dismiss Godolphin and the Whigs; she did so, and Harley became Prime Minister in effect (though the name was not yet in general use).<sup>1</sup> A general election was then held (1710) and a large Tory majority was returned. Harley was made Earl of Oxford, and St. John, his right-hand man and a far abler statesman, became Lord Bolingbroke.

Fall of the  
Godolphin  
Ministry  
1710

The first business of the Tories was to make peace. The war had become a stalemate, and the Tories refused to continue it merely in order to retain Marlborough in power. The queen was growing tired of the duchess and her tempers; the star of Mrs. Masham was in the ascendant. There was certainly a great deal to be said in favour of peace, especially when, in 1711, the Emperor Joseph I died. His successor was his brother, the Archduke Charles, who became the Emperor Charles VI. There was clearly no purpose in continuing the war in order to make Charles king of Spain, and so unite Spain and Austria as in the days of Charles V. The allies had failed to dislodge Philip V from Spain itself, though they had conquered the Spanish provinces in Italy and the Netherlands. These points were made clear by the publication (in 1711) of Dean Swift's famous pamphlet, *The Conduct of the Allies*.

The Oxford  
Ministry  
1710-14

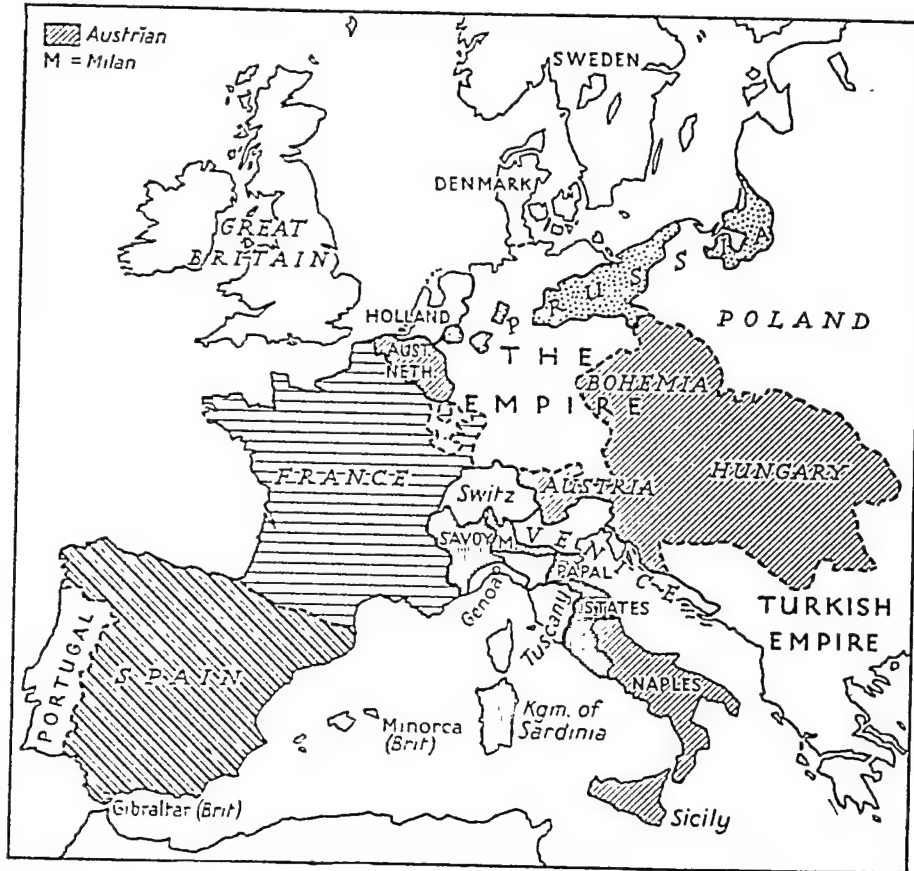
"The Con-  
duct of the  
Allies", 1711

Dean Swift was a Tory, and his virulent pen was at the service of the ministry. Swift is now best remembered as the author of *Gulliver's Travels*, but in his own day he was known and feared as a political writer. The publication of the *Conduct of the Allies* was his greatest triumph; it did much to procure the dismissal of the great Duke of Marlborough. Never in our

Political  
writers  
under  
Queen  
Anne

<sup>1</sup> The name *Prime Minister* was occasionally used in Anne's reign in reference to Godolphin. Defoe, writing in 1714, twice speaks of Oxford as Prime Minister.

history has so much literary talent been put to political uses as in the days of Queen Anne. Richard Steele, an ex-army



EUROPE IN 1720

*Map showing the Disruption of the Spanish Empire in Europe.*

By the Treaty of Utrecht (1713), Sicily went to the Duke of Savoy, Naples and Sardinia to Austria. In 1720 the two islands were exchanged, and the Duke of Savoy took the title of King of Sardinia. It was under the House of Savoy that all Italy was united in the nineteenth century. In 1735 Naples and Sicily became an independent kingdom, which lasted till 1860. The Austrian rule in Belgium and Milan lasted till the French Revolution.

officer, was an Irishman like Swift ; he became a Whig pamphle-  
 The Spectator 1710 teer and founder of the *Tatler* (1709) and the *Spectator* (1710).  
 The *Spectator* was published daily ; its most distinguished con-

tributor was Joseph Addison, a man who had a great influence in the development of English prose and the creator of Sir Roger de Coverley. Another writer of genius was Daniel Defoe,<sup>1</sup> of whom it has been said that he changed his politics as often as the queen changed her ministries. Such was the array of talent placed before the readers of Queen Anne's day when they opened their daily newspapers in their coffee-houses.

Even before Marlborough was dismissed (1711), Oxford and Bolingbroke opened negotiations for peace with France behind his back, and behind the backs of their allies. The Duke of Ormonde, who succeeded Marlborough in command, had the humiliation of being obliged to order his troops to desert their old ally, Prince Eugène, in the hour of battle—for Oxford had already come to terms with Versailles. The other allies eventually came in, and a general peace was arranged at Utrecht (1713).

The Treaty of Utrecht is one of the great landmarks in British and European history. From it Britain emerged as first of the European powers. Her old enemy, King Louis, was humbled, for his career of conquest was at an end, and France was nearly bankrupt. The principal terms of the settlement were as follows:

1. The Allies acknowledged Philip V as King of Spain and of the Indies, on the understanding that he was to be excluded from the succession to the French throne.
2. Louis XIV threw over the Pretender, James III, and recognized the Protestant Succession in Great Britain.
3. The King of Spain resigned the Spanish Netherlands, Milan, Sardinia, and Naples to the Emperor, and Sicily to the Duke of Savoy (see note to map opposite).
4. Britain received Gibraltar and Minorca in Europe, Acadie in North America, and the French gave up their claims to Hudson Bay and Newfoundland.
5. By a separate treaty Spain granted Britain the right of supplying the Spanish colonies with negro slaves. This was known as the Asiento Treaty, from the Spanish *asiento* (contract) *de negros*. She also allowed one British ship per year to trade in commodities, other than slaves, with Cartagena or Portobello on the Spanish Main.

<sup>1</sup> For *Robinson Crusoe* (1719), see Chapter XXIX.

Dismissal of  
Marl-  
borough  
1711

The Treaty  
of Utrecht  
1713

Gibraltar,  
Minorca,  
Acadie,  
and New-  
foundland

The  
Asiento  
Treaty

It will be noted that the main object for which the Emperor had entered the war—to prevent the Bourbon Succession in Spain—was not achieved; nor was the main object of the Spanish people achieved, i.e. the preservation of an undivided Spanish Empire. Britain's chief object—the overthrow of the menace of Louis' power—was, however, accomplished. And the capture of Gibraltar was an important milestone on the road to Empire.

Before they had finished making peace with France and Spain, the Tories turned, with no less willingness and considerably greater zest, to attack their enemies at home. Sir Robert Walpole, a young Whig member of the last ministry, and a future Prime Minister of Great Britain, was sent to the Tower on a charge of corruption (1712). Godolphin was dying, but such were the attacks in Parliament against Marlborough that the great general had to flee to the Netherlands and Germany, where he remained until the death of the queen and the fall of the Tories. So far could ingratitude, combined with party malice, lead Englishmen in the days of good Queen Anne. The Tories also began an attack on the Dissenters, who were Whigs to a man. A monstrous Schism Act, reminiscent of the English acts against the Irish, was passed through Parliament, by which all schools kept by Dissenters were to be suppressed.<sup>1</sup>

The failing health of the queen made the situation of the Tory ministry precarious. The Whigs were already in communication with George Lewis, Elector of Hanover, whose aged mother, the Dowager Electress Sophia, was Anne's heiress under the Act of Settlement. The Earl of Oxford could not make up his mind to prepare for the queen's death, though that event was evidently approaching. Bolingbroke therefore determined to get rid of Oxford, and he persuaded Anne to dismiss him. What Bolingbroke, now in control, would have done if he had had time will never be known: his enemies declared that he meant to restore the elder line of Stuarts in the person of 'James III', known to history as the Old Pretender. But Bolingbroke had no time to make any plans:

<sup>1</sup> The Schism Act was a dead letter: actually only two or three schools were closed. It remained on the Statute Book for five years.

he had been in power less than a week when the queen died (1 August 1714).

Death of  
Anne  
Aug. 1714

The sudden death of Anne saved the Hanoverian succession. The Electress Sophia had died just before the queen, and Bolingbroke joined the Whigs in proclaiming the elector as George I of England. The new king landed in England in September; his first action was to dismiss Bolingbroke and instal the Whigs in power. Bolingbroke fled to France and joined the Pretender. The Whigs and Tories had struggled for power between 1688 and 1714; but now the Whigs were able to claim that they, and they alone, were the true upholders of the Revolution settlement. Just or unjust, this claim established them in power for half a century.

Accession  
of  
George I  
1714



An eighteenth-century coffee-house, the centre of political discussions, and the origin of the modern club.

# DATE SUMMARY: WILLIAM AND MARY AND ANNE (1688-1714)

BRITISH ISLES	EUROPE
WILLIAM AND MARY (1689-1702)	
1688 THE REVOLUTION	
1689 Bill of Rights	1689-97 War of League of Augsburg
Toleration Act	
✕ Killiecrankie	
Siege of Londonderry	
1690 ✕ Boyne	
1691 Siege of Limerick	
1692 Massacre of Glencoe	1692 ✕ Barfleur
1694 Queen Mary <i>d.</i>	
BANK OF ENGLAND founded	
1695-9 Darien Scheme	1697 Treaty of Ryswick
	1698-9 Partition Treaties
	1700 Charles II (Spain) <i>d.</i>
1701 Act of Settlement	1701 Grand Alliance
James II <i>d.</i>	
1702 William III <i>d.</i>	
ANNE (1702-14)	
1703 Birth of Wesley	<i>War of the Spanish Succession (1702-13)</i>
	1703 Methuen Treaty
	1704 ✕ BLENHEIM
	Capture of GIBRALTAR
	1705-11 Emperor Joseph I
	1706 ✕ Ramillies
1707 ACT OF UNION—ENGLAND AND SCOTLAND	1708 ✕ Oudenarde. Capture of Minorca
	1709 ✕ Malplaquet
1710 <i>The Spectator</i>	
Handel in England	
1710-14 Oxford Ministry	1711-40 Emperor Charles VI
1711 Dismissal of Marlborough	
1714 Bolingbroke Ministry	1713 TREATY OF UTRECHT
Anne <i>d.</i>	



## XXVI

### THE RULE OF THE WHIGS

#### 1. *Hanoverians and Jacobites*

THE Elector of Hanover, who became King George I of England in 1714 at the age of fifty-four, was not an attractive personality.<sup>1</sup> Like William of Orange, this German princeling had been summoned to the throne of England on religious and political grounds. He had none of the Dutchman's ability, but, like him, lacked all personal charm; his coldness, said a wit, would freeze his surroundings. His private life was one long scandal. He had quarrelled with his wife, Sophia Dorothea of Celle, condoned the murder of her lover, and shut her up for thirty years in a German castle till she died. Her son George, created Prince of Wales (1714), was on such bad terms with his father that the king tried to prevent his succeeding to the electorate; quarrels between father and son were unfortunately traditional in the Hanoverian family. Lacking a queen, George I brought with him from Germany the fat Countess of Kielmansegge and the thin Countess of Schulenberg, nicknamed in England the 'Elephant' and the 'Maypole'.<sup>2</sup>

George knew little of English politics, but he knew enough to realize that it was the Whigs who had put him on the throne, and the Whigs who proposed to keep him there. This fact was so firmly impressed on the minds of the first two Georges that no Tory ministry was appointed during their reigns, a period of nearly fifty years (1714-60). In 1714, when Oxford and other leading Tories were impeached for treason against the Hanoverian dynasty, Bolingbroke fled to France,

The  
Hano-  
verians and  
the Whigs  
1714-60

<sup>1</sup> 'Brusque, heartless, cruel, avaricious, mean, sensual, punctilious, and masterful' (Grant Robertson, *England under the Hanoverians*).

<sup>2</sup> 'Both these ladies loved Hanover and its delights . . . and at first would not quit the place. Schulenberg, in fact, could not come on account of her debts; but finding the Maypole would not come, the Elephant packed up her trunks and slipped out of Hanover, unwieldy as she was. On this the Maypole straightway put herself in motion, and followed her beloved George Lewis.' (Thackeray, *The Four Georges*.)

and with his departure the Tory party was discredited and leaderless.

The  
'Fifteen

Even the Whigs could not pretend to feel any affection for such a king as George I, while to most of the Tories his occupation of the throne was an outrage. A Jacobite<sup>1</sup> plot was hatched in France to overthrow the Hanoverian succession, and place Prince James Edward, the Old Pretender, on the throne. Scotland was chosen as the point of attack on account of the supposed loyalty of the Highland clans to the Stuart cause.<sup>2</sup> There, in September 1715, the Jacobite Rebellion broke out. It was led by the Earl of Mar, an unsteady personage known as 'Bobbing John'. Mar raised the Highlands, occupied Perth, and proclaimed James III and VIII king. A Jacobite force crossed the Border, and was joined by a few Englishmen, but was surrounded and taken prisoner at Preston (13 November). On the same day occurred an engagement between Mar and Argyll at Sheriffmuir, rendered famous by the story (not without some foundation) that both sides ran away. After the battle Mar retired to Perth, and enthusiasm for the rebellion died down. It was not increased by the arrival of the Old Pretender in Scotland (December), for he was a man of cold and unsympathetic manners, a hopeless leader for a failing cause. His loyalty to his religion—which he refused to change to become King of Great Britain—made it unlikely that many except Highlanders would join him. After a few months he returned to France, to spend the wandering life which earned him the name of 'Roving Jamie'. The rebellion was an ignominious failure, and its collapse strengthened the hands of the government. For many years the name Tory was synonymous with Jacobite, and Jacobite with traitor. This was far from just. But the very accusation was enough to discredit the Tory cause.

Preston and  
Sheriffmuir  
1715

The Whigs were thus firmly established in power in 1715.

<sup>1</sup> The name was derived from that of the Old Pretender—James (Latin, Jacobus).

<sup>2</sup> It is doubtful whether the Highland clans would have remained loyal to any dynasty or any principle. They were warlike, and disliked government from England—in fact strong government from anywhere. Above all, they hated the Whig Campbells.

Their leaders were Lord Sunderland, Marlborough's son-in-law; James, Earl Stanhope, the soldier who had captured Minorca in the last war; Charles, Viscount Townshend (the 'Turnip Townshend' of agriculture), and Sir Robert Walpole. Townshend and Walpole quarrelled with their colleagues, and were dismissed in 1717; and Stanhope became the leading minister for the next four years (1717-21). It was during this time that the foundations of the Whig oligarchy were firmly laid; Walpole, who ruled England for twenty years, carried on the same traditions of government.

The Whig  
Leaders

The rule of the Whigs depended on two things, control of the Crown, and control of the House of Commons. The first was made easy by the fact that the first Hanoverian kings had no possible alternative to a Whig ministry. In addition to this, George I spoke no English, and could scarcely preside at meetings of the Cabinet. Both he and his son, George II, were more attached to Hanover than to England,<sup>1</sup> and let the Whigs rule England in their name. This meant that one powerful weapon was put in the hands of ministers—the patronage of the Crown. Ambitious men in the Church, the Army and Navy, and the legal profession knew that they could rise to the highest posts only by remaining sound Whigs; civil servants in government pay were chosen and promoted on the same principle. This system, which lasted till George III became king, was one of the main bulwarks of the Whig supremacy.

The Whigs  
and the  
Crown

The other pillar of the system was the control of Parliament.<sup>2</sup> The Whigs had a majority in the Lords, and they took measures to obtain and keep a majority in the House of Commons. About a quarter of the Commons—sometimes more—could be accounted for by 'placemen', that is, members of Parliament

The Whigs  
and the  
House of  
Commons

<sup>1</sup> George I was very anxious to get back to Hanover at the first opportunity. He insisted on the repeal of the clause in the Act of Settlement which forbade the sovereign to leave England without the consent of Parliament. He was in such a hurry to go (in 1716) that the Earl of Peterborough sarcastically remarked: 'I believe the king has quite forgotten the misfortune that befell himself and his family on August 1st, 1714.'

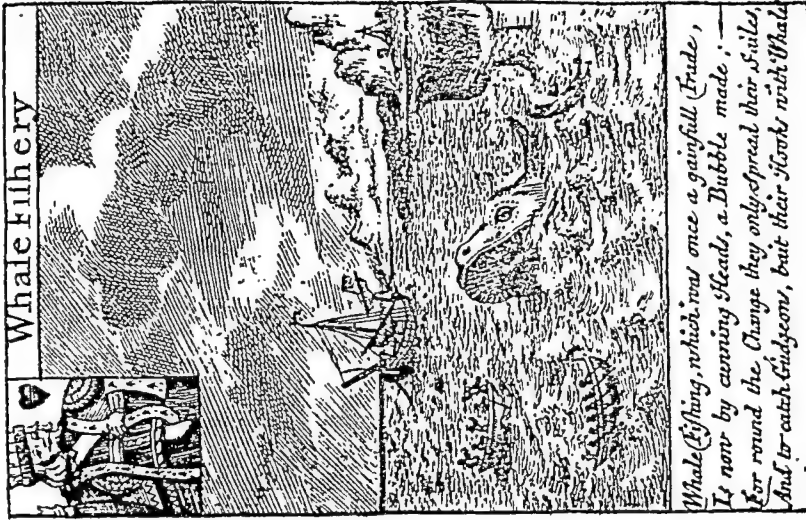
<sup>2</sup> After the passage of the Septennial Act (1716) a new Parliament had to be elected at least once in seven years. This Act remained in force till 1911.

who held minor posts on condition of continuing to vote for the government. The number of such posts was large, and the duties attached to them small; but the Whigs thought that the more posts—and votes—there were the better. Apart from members who were thus bribed to vote for the government, it was possible to control the election of members in a large number of seats. In the eighteenth century the vast majority of the House of Commons was elected by the English boroughs; and these may be divided into the free, the rotten, and the nomination boroughs. There were only a very few instances of free boroughs—places like Westminster where there was a wide franchise, and the electors could not so easily be bribed. The rotten boroughs were towns where a few hundred men, whose rights depended on local custom, had the vote; these men were systematically bribed by the local agent. This process was carried a stage farther in the 'nomination boroughs', where the owner simply nominated the member. The election of county members was more difficult to control; but here again the influence of local landlords was predominant.

Elections were an expensive business for both sides. Mr. Thomas Pitt, agent for His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales and Duke of Cornwall, estimated the expenses of the elections at Grampound and Tregony, two tiny Cornish boroughs, at £1,200 and £1,050, respectively (1747). 'It must cost', says this gentleman, writing of a Grampound election, 'damnably dear. The villains have got ahead to that degree and rise in their demands so extravagantly that I have been very near damning them and kicking them to the devil at once. The dirty rascals despise 20 guineas as much as the King's Sergeant does a half-guinea fee.'

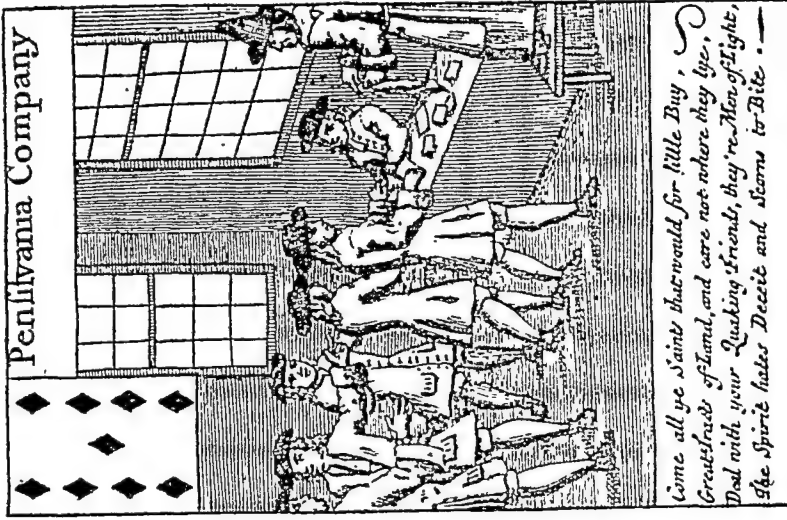
Results of  
the old  
Election  
System

Such was the system on which England was governed. In spite of its obvious lack of morality, it did not produce bad men. Borough-mongers and bribers of electors were at least free to choose their own candidates, and sometimes they chose well; they took a pride in selecting young men of talent to represent them. It is quite arguable that such a system produced a House of Commons as efficient as that returned by universal suffrage. And the members returned were not all mere place-hunters; some of them were able men who



Whale Fishery

*Whale Fishing, which was once a gainfull Trade,  
Is now by cunning Heads, a Bubble made ; —  
For round the Change they only spread their Sails,  
And to catch Gudgeons, bait their Hooks with Whales.*



Pennsylvania Company

*Come all ye Saints that would for little Buy,  
Great Fracts of Land, and care not where they lye,  
Deal with your Quaking Friends, they're Men of Light,  
The Spirit hates Deceit and Scorns to Bite.*

### THE SOUTH SEA BUBBLE

Playing cards satirizing the mania for speculation.

of Bombay in which the original Fort Stoon is still called THE FORT.

took the only path open to them to enter the service of their country.

Tory  
influences

It must not be supposed that the Tories were any less corrupt than the Whigs; they were only less successful—up to 1760—because the Whigs had the patronage of the Crown behind them, and because the Whig leaders were richer. The Whig party machine was in the hands of an oligarchy of rich noblemen—the Pelhams, the Russells, the Cavendishes, and others—whose wealth frequently enabled them to outbid the local Tories, though, of course, a substantial minority of Tories was always returned. And though the Whig oligarchy dominated the central government, the local government of the country-side was dominated by the squires, who were mainly Tories. The squires, as Justices of the Peace—unpaid—administered the country-side and drew their power from local influence. So the power of the Whig oligarchy at the centre was limited by the power of the squires, mainly Tory, at the circumference.

Stanhope  
Foreign  
Minister  
1717-21

The Whigs under George I made an important change in the direction of English foreign policy. Louis XIV had died in 1715, and the ministers of the young Louis XV concluded a peaceful alliance with England, for which Stanhope was largely responsible. By the inclusion of Holland, this agreement became the Triple Alliance (1718), which kept England at peace with France for a quarter of a century. Not until colonial rivalry became acute was the alliance broken.

The South  
Sea Bubble  
1720

It was a financial crisis which brought about Stanhope's fall and paved the way for the rise of Walpole. The gambling spirit was rife in the eighteenth century, and finance was even less understood by the public than it is to-day. The South Sea Company had been founded by Harley in 1711; after the Peace of Utrecht it received the monopoly of the trade with Spanish America, under the Asiento Treaty (see p. 573). Its trade was never really profitable, but in spite of this fact the company offered to take over from the government 31 millions of the National Debt. The scheme was opposed in Parliament by a minority, of whom Walpole was one. But the company gained the confidence of the country, which it did not deserve, and its stock rose to fantastic heights. By June 1720, £100 South Sea Stock reached its highest figure—£1,060. Then came the

reaction; a panic as sudden as the former speculating mania set in; by December South Sea Stock had fallen to £135. Thousands of people of all classes were ruined; the South Sea Bubble had burst.

Some relief was obtained by distributing the private property of the directors, to the amount of £2,000,000; but there was a universal outcry for revenge. Ministers were involved in the proceedings, and the government fell; one minister, Craggs, committed suicide. One man had been distinguished by his opposition to the South Sea scheme from the first—Sir Robert Walpole. He accordingly stepped into the leading place in the ministry, a position which he was to hold for twenty years.

Fall of the  
Ministry  
1721

## 2. *Sir Robert Walpole*

Sir Robert Walpole came of a long line of Norfolk squires, and was third of a family of nineteen children. He was educated at Eton and King's College, Cambridge, and, after the deaths of his father and two elder brothers, succeeded to the family estates. Walpole had all the vices of the eighteenth-century country gentleman; his manners were coarse, and he had few intellectual pleasures—none to compare with his chief delight, which was hunting. He had a low opinion of human nature, and took a cynical pleasure in distributing the various bribes, in the shape of titles, places, and pensions, to the members of his party.<sup>1</sup> But in this respect he was no worse than the Whigs who preceded him, and better than the Whigs who followed him, in office. Walpole was more than a great parliamentary manager; he was a great minister. He loved his work, and he gave himself up to it with all the devotion and quiet persistence of a successful man of business.

Character  
of Walpole

Walpole succeeded to power after eighty years of revolutions: old men still living could remember the battle of Worcester, the death of Cromwell, the Restoration, the Popish Plot, and the landing of William of Orange. Walpole gave England twenty years of what she most needed—quiet government.

End of  
the Revolu-  
tionary era

<sup>1</sup> He accepted the Order of the Garter for himself. In this he was unlike Lord Melbourne (Victoria's first Prime Minister), who refused the Garter, saying that he did not see why he should be such a fool as to buy himself when he could buy some one else with it. (See Morley's *Walpole*.)

The year he fell from power (1742) was the hundredth anniversary of Edgehill, the first battle of the Civil War; he had done much to change England into the quiet land she still is. Englishmen under Walpole were not filled with the high religious principles of the seventeenth century; but they were not so ready to cut each others' throats. George I recalled Bolingbroke from exile; Bolingbroke was not beheaded, nor was any other politician of those times. Under Walpole, English politics lost something of their former fierceness. The steadiness of England, and her dislike of violent revolutions, are things which we now take for granted; we owe much of them to the change which took place under Sir Robert Walpole.

Peace  
policy

England needed rest from war as much as from revolution, and Walpole gave it her. He maintained the alliance with France and kept on good terms with the aged French minister, Cardinal Fleury, who loved peace as much as Sir Robert. Walpole refused to embark on continental wars, and once remarked with pride (during the War of the Polish Succession): 'Fifty thousand men killed this year in Europe, and not one of them an Englishman.'

The Prime  
Minister  
and the  
Cabinet

Walpole's place in the history of English government is an important one. The British Constitution is not the work of one man or a single generation; it is the slow growth of time. Perhaps even Walpole, who did so much to shape our form of government, was not aware of what he did. But in his day Cabinet government assumed some of the characteristics it still retains. This result was due to an accident—the accident that Walpole was minister when George I was king. Given a masterful man like Walpole, and a German-speaking king who could not preside at the Cabinet, and the office of Prime Minister came into being of its own accord. The name Prime Minister was not recognized for a long time, and Walpole himself repudiated the title; yet he was as much Prime Minister as any man who ruled after him. The premiership, it has been said, is 'the keystone to the Cabinet arch. The premier to-day chooses his own colleagues, and he, not the king, is the real head of the executive government. All this was foreshadowed under Walpole's rule.'

'In England the executive government is responsible to



Parliament, and cannot long remain in power unless it can command a majority in the House of Commons. This result has usually<sup>1</sup> been attained by forming the Cabinet from one party, the party which is in the majority in the Commons. This system also was coming to be recognized in Walpole's day—hence his anxiety to keep his majority by methods of corruption. But, under the early Georges, the Crown still retained the right of dismissing ministries, whether they had the confidence of the House or not. The ministry, in fact, was responsible first to the king, and secondly to the House of Commons; to-day this situation in practice is reversed. The importance of the king's wishes was clearly shown when George II succeeded his father in 1727. Since George I had loved Sir Robert Walpole, it was only natural to suppose that George II would hate him—and hate him at first he did. His hostility might have proved fatal to Walpole's power but for the fact that the minister had carefully provided for the future. He had enlisted the help of George II's strong-minded wife, Caroline of Anspach; she and Sir Robert became great friends, and George II, with good reason, trusted the queen's judgement. Besides, Walpole had only met one man who could resist the power of money, and that man was certainly not George II. When Sir Robert announced that the Civil List<sup>2</sup> would be increased by £100,000, His Majesty's favour was assured.

Powers of  
the Crown

Death of  
George I  
1727

George II  
and Queen  
Caroline

Another feature of English Cabinet government is the collective responsibility of the whole Cabinet; and this involves the agreement of various ministers with the Prime Minister on major points of policy. Here again Walpole shaped the outline of the Constitution; for he would have no ministers who would not work, not merely with him, but under him. His brother-in-law, Lord Townshend, shared his return to power in 1721, but the firm, as Walpole said, had to be Walpole and Townshend, not Townshend and Walpole. Townshend resented the other's supremacy, quarrelled with him, and resigned (1730).

Walpole's  
colleagues

<sup>1</sup> The same result can be obtained by a coalition of two or more parties, all represented in the Cabinet, and voting together in the House of Commons.

<sup>2</sup> Civil List—the part of the revenue set apart for the king's use. The Civil List under George I had amounted to £700,000.

He retired to grow turnips in Norfolk; we shall hear of him again.

Bolingbroke  
and the  
Opposition

Walpole's monopoly of central power naturally created an Opposition, and one that was not formed on strictly party lines. It consisted of discontented Whigs as well as Tories; the prime mover was Bolingbroke, who returned to England in 1725 and directed the attacks on Walpole for ten years. Bolingbroke also issued a paper, called the *Craftsman*. He lashed out against the Minister in brilliant and vindictive articles; he called Walpole 'the brazen image which the king hath set up'. Lord Carteret, a Whig, was another able member of the Opposition group. In George II's reign Frederick, Prince of Wales, joined the group for no better reason than that his father, the king, supported Sir Robert. The prince was a fool, and it was beyond even Bolingbroke's powers to make him into a leader. Yet his adherence took the sting out of Walpole's criticism that his opponents were all Jacobites.

The Excise  
Bill, 1733

Sir Robert's enemies scored their first considerable triumph when they forced him to withdraw his Excise Bill<sup>1</sup> (1733). Walpole had retained the confidence of the trading classes and the bankers ever since the days of the South Sea Bubble, and he was able to keep taxation low. The Excise Bill, however, raised a political storm, as absurd as it was violent. The Bill contained a proposal to collect the duties on spirits and tobacco in the shops and inns at which these articles were sold, instead of at the ports. This simple proposal, which would have helped to check smuggling, roused a tremendous outcry, of which the Opposition took full advantage. It was alleged that the new Excise would lead to the employment of numerous officials, who would employ the hateful method of raiding private houses to collect the tax. Crowds marched about the streets, crying, 'No slavery, no excise!' Walpole was not the man to resist popular clamour; he gave way and abandoned the scheme. It was a victory for noise and jealous faction over sound finance and common sense.

In 1735 Bolingbroke quarrelled with his Whig friends and retired from active politics. He retired to write his *Patriot King*, a counter-blow to the Whig theory of monarchy, and an

<sup>1</sup> See illustration, p. 595.

inspiration to the future occupant of the throne—not, as it turned out, Prince Frederick, but his son George III.<sup>1</sup> In the same year that Bolingbroke retired, an even more formidable figure entered Parliament—William Pitt.

Pitt was at this time twenty-seven years of age. He was the grandson of Governor Pitt of Madras, who had amassed a large fortune in India, which he spent in buying estates and pocket-boroughs in England. William Pitt was educated at Eton and Trinity College, Oxford. He obtained a commission in a cavalry regiment, and then entered Parliament (1735). He sat for the family borough of Old Sarum (near Salisbury) which contained few, if any, inhabitants. He at once joined the Opposition, and made a great impression by his first speech in Parliament. 'We must muzzle this terrible cornet of horse', remarked Walpole, and struck his name off the Army List. But it required more than a Walpole to muzzle Pitt; indeed, nothing short of death could silence that amazing oratory, perhaps the most remarkable to which the House of Commons has ever listened. His eloquence was a superb art; no actor ever played upon the feelings of his audience with greater skill than did Pitt. 'The terrible', said one contemporary, 'was his peculiar power; then the whole House sank before him.' 'His words', remarked Lord Lyttelton, 'have sometimes frozen my young blood into stagnation, and sometimes made it pace in such a hurry through my veins that I could scarce support it.' His subjects were as magnificent as his methods—'great subjects, great empires, great characters'. Such was the man who joined the ranks of the Opposition to the ageing Walpole. In his hands lay the future of Britain and the British Empire.

### 3. *War—Spanish, French, and Jacobite*

The death of Queen Caroline (1737) was a heavy blow to Walpole; he had lost a friend at Court who might have proved a useful ally in the stormy years that lay ahead. The quiet period was passing; 'Let sleeping dogs lie' had been Walpole's

<sup>1</sup> See below, p. 618. The *Patriot King* was written in 1738, but not published till 1749, two years before the death of the author and of Frederick, Prince of Wales.

motto; but they would not sleep for ever. War, which Walpole detested, was about to break on Britain.

We have seen how, under the Asiento Treaty of 1713, the British were allowed to supply Spanish America with slaves, and also to send *one* ship a year to the Spanish Main for other trade. But the British had for long been infringing this treaty by sending unlicensed trading-ships into West Indian ports. The Spanish authorities were angry, and tried to catch the offenders. They caught one Captain Jenkins, and—according to his own story—cut off one of his ears. His return to England with this story aroused a storm of indignation; he was brought before the House of Commons and produced his ear in a bottle. The Opposition demanded war with Spain. Walpole tried to settle the matter peaceably, but national feeling was too strong for him. Many people were convinced that an attack on the Spanish Empire would be an easy and profitable business. So Walpole, as usual, gave way, and declared war against his better judgement. ‘They are ringing their bells now,’ he remarked, as the bells of London announced the news; ‘they will be wringing their hands soon.’

The War of Jenkins’ Ear is chiefly remarkable in being the first of that series of wars against France and Spain which lasted three-quarters of a century. Philip V had, in 1733, signed the Family Compact with his nephew Louis XV, linking the two Bourbon powers together in a defensive alliance. The war which England so lightly declared against Spain in 1739 therefore led to a French war. This, as we shall see in the next chapter, was the signal for the outbreak of a general colonial war.

The Spanish war met with little of the success which its supporters had prophesied. Attacks on Spanish ports yielded little profit. Even the gallant exploit of Admiral Anson, who imitated Drake by sailing round the world, attacking Spanish ports on the way, did not much affect the issue. Meanwhile, Walpole was blamed for the ill success of the war which he had done all he could to avoid. In 1742 he was defeated in the Commons on a minor issue, and resigned. Among the charges afterwards made against him was that he had called himself Prime Minister, an office which was declared to be unknown to

Jenkins’  
Ear

War with  
Spain, 1739

Anson’s  
Voyage  
1740

Resignation  
of Walpole  
1742

the British Constitution. He retired to the Lords as Earl of Orford, and died three years later.

The new administration was called the Broad-bottom Ministry, because it was supposed to be a 'national' government including men of all parties. The Earl of Wilmington was its nominal head, but its most influential members were Henry Pelham and Lord Carteret. It was Carteret, backed by the fiery little king, George II, who plunged England into the war which was now raging on the Continent—the War of the Austrian Succession.

The Emperor Charles VI had no son to succeed him as ruler of the Hapsburg dominions in Austria, Hungary, Bohemia, and Belgium. But before he died he obtained a promise—called the Pragmatic Sanction—from the leading European powers that his daughter, Maria Theresa, should be acknowledged as Queen of Hungary and ruler of his other possessions.<sup>1</sup> Charles died (October 1740), and Maria Theresa ascended the Hapsburg throne. The new King of Prussia, Frederick II (the Great), who had succeeded his father six months earlier, sent her friendly messages, and even a promise of military help in case of need. Yet less than two months later, without the slightest provocation or excuse, he led 30,000 troops across the Austrian frontier. In a few months he had overrun the province of Silesia, which Maria Theresa was unable to save from his clutches.

In the general European war which followed, France joined Frederick. George II personally headed an army of English and Hanoverians which came to the aid of Maria Theresa. He won the battle of Dettingen (1743), being the last English king to lead his troops in battle. There was a loud outcry against the war in the country and in Parliament, led by Pitt. England, Pitt said, was being dragged into a war in which she had no concern, in the interests of that 'despicable electorate'

<sup>1</sup> Maria Theresa, of course, could not succeed Charles as Emperor. She hoped, however, that her husband, Francis of Lorraine, would be elected. But the Elector of Bavaria, who had married her cousin, was elected instead. When he died her husband was elected as Emperor Francis I (1745), and their descendants continued to hold the Imperial title.

—Hanover. The clamour was so great that Carteret had to retire. Henry Pelham, head of one of the great Whig families, was now the virtual Prime Minister, a position which he held for eleven years (1743-54).

Pelham  
Prime  
Minister  
1743-54

Anglo-  
French  
War  
1744-8

The war in Germany was at first fought by France and England as 'auxiliaries' to the main combatants. But England was also at war with Spain, who was France's ally, and Louis XV formally declared war on Great Britain in 1744. This war lasted four years. There was further fighting in Germany, but the Austrians failed to dislodge Frederick from

Treaty of  
Aix-la-  
Chapelle  
1748

Silesia. When peace was made at Aix-la-Chapelle (1748) he kept the province, and ever since<sup>1</sup> it has been part of Prussia. The French restored Madras to England in exchange for Louisbourg in Canada, which the British colonists had captured.<sup>2</sup>

In the midst of the French war the Jacobites made one final bid for the throne. The Old Pretender did not come in person to make this attempt, but sent instead his son, Charles Edward, the Young Chevalier—the Bonnie Prince Charlie of Scottish history and song. Prince Charles, unlike his father, was a good leader; the enthusiasm which he inspired among the Highlanders did not die down in one generation. But tragedy waited on the Stuart cause as so often it had before.

The  
'Forty-five

The Prince landed at Moidart in the West Highlands (August 1745), and the clansmen flocked to his standard. Soon all Scotland was at his feet. The gallant young prince won all hearts by his noble bearing and his willingness to share the hardships of his men, for he slept in the heather like a common soldier. In September the bells of Edinburgh rang out to welcome him. Then he routed an English army under Sir John Cope at Prestonpans and it seemed as though the rebellion was about to succeed.

Preston-  
pans, 1745

Two things, however, were against it; the French, cut off by the British Navy, sent no help, and the English Jacobites did not rise. Nevertheless, Charles Edward invaded England. He took Carlisle, and Manchester, and by December he was at Derby. There was a panic in the capital, and a run on the Bank. But King George refused to be disturbed—'Pooh! Don't talk

The  
Pretender  
at Derby

<sup>1</sup> Except for the part given to Poland after the Great War.

<sup>2</sup> See next Chapter.

to me that stuff!' he said, when it was suggested he should leave London. Just before Christmas, however, the prince was forced to turn back, for his Highlanders would go no farther. Their enthusiasm was chilled by the lack of response in England, and discipline was sadly lacking on the retreat. The Highlanders won one more victory at Falkirk (January 1746); then they retreated to their hills. The prince was bitterly disappointed, but he went with them. A royalist army was sent north in the spring, under William, Duke of Cumberland, King George's son. He broke the Highland army on Culloden Moor (April 1746); the prince stayed till all was lost and then fled to the hills. For months he lay in hiding amid the humble Highland folk, who would not give him up for the reward which the government offered for his capture and which would have meant riches to them. Many tales are told of him and of those, like the heroic Flora Macdonald, who shielded him. At last he escaped and landed safely in France.

Will ye no come back again?  
Will ye no come back again?  
Better lo'ed ye canna be,  
Will ye no come back again?

Ye trusted in your Hieland men,  
They trusted you, dear Charlie;  
They kent your hiding in the glen,  
Your deadin' was but barely.

English bribes were a' in vain;  
An' e'en tho' puirer we maun be,  
Siller canna buy the heart  
That beats aye for thine and thee.<sup>1</sup>

But 'Bonnie Charlie' never returned to Scotland; forty years later he died a broken man and an exile.

The royal duke put down the rebellion with that severity which earned him the name of 'Butcher Cumberland'; his red-coats hunted down the fugitives. A young officer called James Wolfe—whom we shall hear of again—told Cumberland to his face that he would not order his men to do the 'butcher's

'Butcher'  
Cumber-  
land

<sup>1</sup> The first, third, and fourth verses of 'Will ye no come back again?' By Baroness Nairne, also author of 'Caller Herrin'.

work'. But 'Sweet William' as the English called him—and named a flower after him (which the Scots called 'Stinking Billy')—did his work but too well.

Subjection  
of the  
Highlands

The subjection of the Highlands followed.<sup>1</sup> It was impossible to permit the continued existence of a barbaric society in Great Britain in the eighteenth century. Laws were passed to forbid the wearing of the tartan and the kilt, and the carrying of arms; even the bagpipes were reckoned as 'instruments of war'. Besides this, the old clan system was forcibly abolished; the chiefs became landlords on the English model—and very bad landlords they proved to be. Some of them turned their old followers out of their smallholdings, and made the glens into sheep-runs; thirty thousand Highlanders left their ancient homes and sought refuge in America (before the War of American Independence).

In spite of these hardships, southern manners gradually made an impression in the Highlands, and Great Britain at last became one civilized country. Perhaps nothing did so much to propitiate Highland sentiment as the wise decision of Pitt, when he came to power, to raise Highland regiments and to allow them to fight in their national costume. Within a dozen years of Culloden, the Highlanders were fighting for King George in America with as much gusto as they had once fought for the Young Chevalier in their native hills.

#### 4. *Pitt's Rise to Power*

Two years before the end of the French war Pitt was given a minor post under the government (1746). The Whig lords found him too dangerous as an opponent, and they at last persuaded King George to give him the post of Paymaster of the Forces. It was some time before the king gave way, for he bitterly resented Pitt's contemptuous references to Hanover. In office, Pitt startled England by haughtily refusing to take the perquisites, amounting to thousands of pounds a year, which had usually been attached to the office of Paymaster. It was this,

Pitt in  
office

<sup>1</sup> The subjection of the Highlands was made easier by the fact that a road system now existed in Scotland. The new roads had been planned by English engineers and the work carried out by troops under the command of Marshal Wade (1726-37).



more than anything else, which distinguished Pitt from the old Whigs and earned him the respect and love of his countrymen. He became known as the 'Great Commoner', who openly despised the old corrupt methods of government. But the Whig party machine still creaked on, though it would not last many years longer.

Henry Pelham's ministry (1743-54) is almost bare of events of note, except the 'Forty-Five' Rebellion already described. It was this ministry which at last agreed to the reform of the calendar, substituting for the old Julian Calendar (introduced into Europe by Julius Caesar) the Gregorian (introduced by Pope Gregory XIII in 1582), which for over a century had been in general use on the Continent. There was eleven days' difference between the two calendars, and when the change was made, 2 September was followed by 14 September 1752. This gave rise to the popular cry: 'Give us back our eleven days!' Another change was that 1 January became New Year's Day, instead of 25 March as formerly.<sup>1</sup>

Reform of  
the  
Calendar

In 1754 Henry Pelham died. 'Now I shall have no more peace,' said the king, and he was right. Pelham had been a good party manager, and his place was difficult to fill. He was succeeded as Prime Minister by his brother, the Duke of Newcastle. Newcastle had been a Secretary of State since 1724; he was in office altogether for nearly fifty years. One of the richest men in England, and a staunch Hanoverian, he had been made a duke by George I. He devoted his immense fortune to the Whig party funds, and had a passion for 'managing' the House of Commons. But he was timid and vacillating, and totally unfitted to be Prime Minister of England. Newcastle feared Pitt, yet would not admit him into the Cabinet. Henry Fox (father of the great Whig statesman, Charles James Fox) became Secretary of State; but Pitt, though still Paymaster of the Forces, harassed the Government at every turn. Finally Newcastle plucked up courage to dismiss him (1755). But his own power was coming to an end in the shadow of a war which he knew not how to avoid or control.

Duke of  
Newcastle's  
Ministry  
1754-6

<sup>1</sup> The names of the months, September, October, November, December, the seventh, eighth, ninth, and tenth months of the year by the old reckoning, still remind us of the Julian Calendar.

After the end of the War of the Austrian Succession, Maria Theresa plotted a revenge on the King of Prussia. Her agents persuaded the Court of Versailles to change sides; she also made an alliance with Russia. Frederick, realizing that a formidable coalition for the partition of Prussia was being formed, looked around for allies. He found one in his uncle, King George II, who had fought against him in the last war. The prime mover in this diplomatic revolution was the Austrian minister, Kaunitz; but when it became known that France was about to change sides, England changed too. Colonial rivalry alone made it impossible that she should fight on the French side. The alliance between Great Britain and Prussia was signed in January 1756, that between France and the Empress in the following May. This was Newcastle's greatest triumph; the alliance with the formidable Frederick of Prussia proved to be very valuable to England in the coming conflict.

Diplomatic  
Revolution  
in Europe

Treaty of  
Westmin-  
ster, 1756

Frederick was aware that the Elector of Saxony had concluded a secret alliance with Austria. He therefore acted with characteristic suddenness; he invaded Saxony and occupied Dresden. Since Saxony lay between his own kingdom and the Austrian dominions, he was thus able to begin the war with a buffer-state between Prussia and her chief enemy. So the Seven Years War began (1756). Fighting had already broken out between the French and British in India and America.

Outbreak of  
the Seven  
Years War  
1756

The outbreak of war in Europe, which was followed by an Anglo-French war in three continents,<sup>1</sup> overwhelmed the wretched Prime Minister of England. The mismanagement of our army and navy caused disasters in the first year of the war, and Newcastle at last resigned, having been continuously in office for thirty-nine years. The king was persuaded to overcome his objections to the Great Commoner, and a ministry was formed, including Pitt, with the Duke of Devonshire at its head (December 1756–April 1757). But Pitt found that he could not manage the House of Commons without the help of the Whig party machine—which meant the help of Newcastle.

The Pitt-  
Newcastle  
Ministry  
1757–61

So a new ministry was formed (June 1757) which included both the duke and Pitt. Newcastle managed the Commons, and left the conduct of the war—of whose vast issues he had but the

<sup>1</sup> See next Chapter.

faintest conception—to his great colleague. It was not a moment too soon. Called to rule his country in a dark hour of her fortunes, Pitt, in a few years, changed the history of Britain and of the world. He inspired his countrymen with his own great faith in their future, and he was the real creator of the British Empire. His famous words on being called to power, though not remarkable for their modesty, contained the sober truth: 'I know that I can save the country, and that no one else can!'

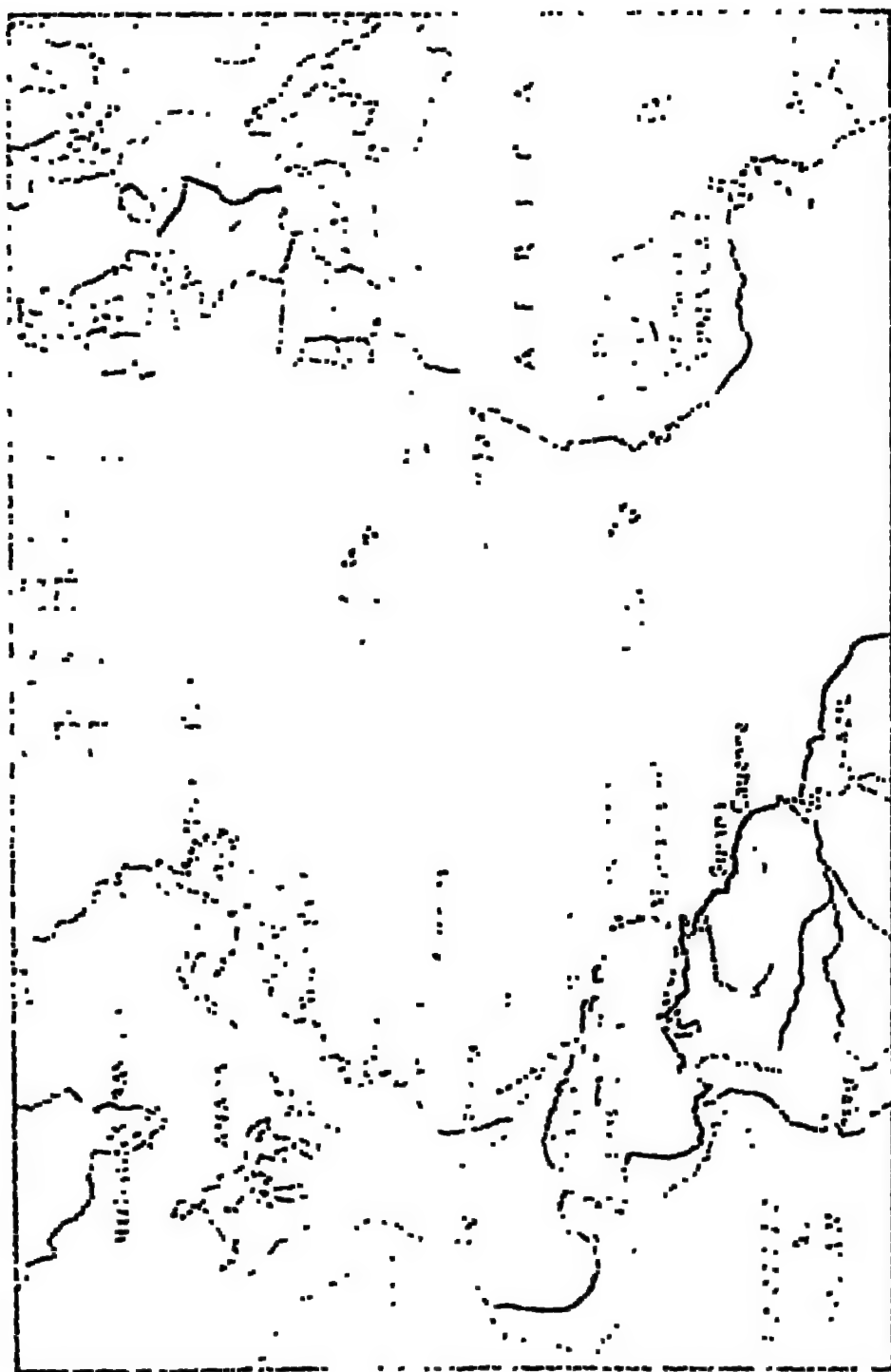


The Excise Bill, 1733 (see p. 586). A contemporary cartoon ridiculing the Bill, showing the Lion and the Unicorn yoked to a beer barrel.

## DATE SUMMARY: THE WHIGS (1714-56)

ENGLAND (POLITICAL)	ENGLAND (SOCIAL AND LITERARY)	EUROPE, AMERICA, AND INDIA
THE WHIGS BEFORE WALPOLE (1714-21)		
1714-27 George I		1715 Louis XIV <i>d.</i>
1714-20 First Whig Ministry		1715-74 Louis XV
1715 Jacobite Rebellion		1717 Triple Alliance (Britain, Holland, France)
1717 Stanhope, chief minister	1719 <i>Robinson Crusoe</i>	
1720 South Sea Bubble		
SIR ROBERT WALPOLE (1721-42)		
	1723 Sir Christopher Wren <i>d.</i>	1725 Peter the Great <i>d.</i>
1727-60 George II	1726 <i>Gulliver's Travels</i>	
	1728 <i>The Beggar's Opera</i>	
1733 Excise Bill	1733 Pope's <i>Essay on Man</i>	1732 Georgia founded
1737 Queen Caroline <i>d.</i>	Kay's Shuttle	1733 Family Compact (France and Spain)
	1739 First Methodist Society	1739 Anglo-Spanish War
1742 Walpole resigns		1740 Frederick the Great <i>acc.</i> Emperor Charles VI <i>d.</i>
		1740-8 War of Austrian Suc- cession
WALPOLE'S SUCCESSORS (1742-56)		
1742-3 Broad-bottom Ministry		1744-8 Anglo-French War
1743-54 Henry Pelham's Ministry		1741-54 Dupleix in India
1745 Jacobite Rebellion		1745 Clive in India
1746 <del>St</del> Culloden	1749 <i>Tom Jones</i> (Fielding)	1748 Treaty Aix-la-Chapelle
	1749 <i>The Patriot King</i> (Bolingbroke)	
	1752 Reform of the Calendar	1751 Siege of Arcot
1754-6 Duke of Newcastle's Ministry	1755 Johnson's <i>Dictionary</i>	1753 Fort Duquesne (Canada)
	1756 Macadam born	1755 French defeat Braddock
		1756 Treaty of Westminster (England and Prussia)
		Black Hole of Calcutta





COLONIAL SPHERES OF THE EUROPEAN POWERS. ADJUSTED FEB. 1913

## XXVII

### RIVAL EMPIRES

#### 1. *Britain and France*

WE have seen, in a former chapter,<sup>1</sup> how the five maritime powers of western Europe all possessed colonial empires in the eighteenth century. Of these five powers, the two smaller and weaker, Portugal and Holland, were the first to drop out of the colonial race; the struggle between the remaining three, Britain, France, and Spain, took place in the eighteenth century. France and Spain fought together against their common enemy, Britain; they were allies in the War of the Spanish Succession, and their alliance was renewed by several Family Compacts, of which the first was signed in 1733.

The war of 'Jenkins' Ear' against Spain was, as we have seen, a colonial quarrel, caused by a British infringement of the Treaty of Utrecht. It led, within five years, to a war with France (1744-8), which proved to be but the preliminary round of a great contest which lasted for two generations. England's main concern was not with the tropical empire of Spain; our chief rival was France, and the French and British Empires were about to engage in a struggle to the death.

The French Empire was very similar to our own. Our rivals had trading posts, as we had, in India, where in the time of Dupleix and Clive the battle for supremacy was fought out. India was a problem in itself; the other main theatre, both of trade and war, was the Atlantic. On the eastern side of that ocean lay the home countries and the West African slave-markets; on the western side, North America and the West Indian sugar isles. In Africa the English had several slave-trading posts, of which Gambia was the chief; the French held the mouth of the Senegal, and Goree near by. In the West Indies the French held the islands of Guadeloupe and Martinique, and had established a colony on the island of Hispaniola, called Haiti. By the middle of the eighteenth century Haiti

Colonial  
rivalry of  
Britain and  
France

The French  
Empire

West Africa

West Indies

<sup>1</sup> Chapter XXII.

was exporting twice as much sugar as Jamaica; Guadeloupe and Martinique did more trade than the English island of Barbados.

North  
America

In North America the British gained, at the Peace of Utrecht, the French colony of Acadie, renamed Nova Scotia. They now held the whole Atlantic coast-line, with the exception of Florida, which belonged to Spain. In 1732 Georgia, the thirteenth and last British colony in America, was founded, just north of Florida, by General James Oglethorpe. The general was a philanthropist who was rightly disgusted at the state of the English prisons; he tried to give a few thousand ex-prisoners the chance to start life afresh in the New World.

Georgia  
1732

The foundation of Georgia was resented by the Spanish in Florida, who attacked the new colony, but were driven off.

The French were by no means daunted by the losses they had sustained at Utrecht, which gave their rivals Acadie, Newfoundland, and Hudson Bay. Their position was indeed strong, for they held a commanding position in three areas—the Gulf of St. Lawrence, the basin of the St. Lawrence, and the Mississippi Valley. In the Gulf they held the mainland coast and all the islands, with the exception of Newfoundland. For, though they had lost Acadie, they still retained the Île de St. Jean, and the Île Royale—later known as Prince Edward Isle—and Cape Breton Isle. On the latter island they proceeded, soon after Utrecht, to erect the strongest fortress in North America—Louisbourg—to command the entrance to the Gulf (1720). The French colony of Canada, or New France, embraced the St. Lawrence valley and the Great Lakes; and here again they built forts at strategic points, such as Fort Niagara, between Lakes Ontario and Erie. They also built forts (e.g. Ticonderoga) on Lake Champlain, which commanded the approach to Canada from the Hudson valley. Lastly, the French held Louisiana, which gave them the command of the Mississippi valley, along which also forts were built at intervals.<sup>1</sup>

Louisbourg

Other  
French  
Forts

It was the design of the French to shut up the British in their coastal colonies and develop the rest of the continent themselves. The Appalachian Mountains, which formed a natural

<sup>1</sup> See Map, p. 603.



western barrier to the British colonies, seemed designed by nature to forward the French plan. Nevertheless, the British colonists were unwilling to see the whole Mississippi-Ohio basin fall into French hands, to be linked up, at no distant date, with the French northern colony of Canada. Governor Burnet, of New York, built at his own expense Fort Oswego, on Lake Ontario; Virginian traders crossed the Appalachians and reached the Ohio; companies were formed to develop this region. When the French met the Virginian pioneers they regarded them as interlopers and arrested some of them. To such treatment the British colonists were unlikely to submit.

The British  
on the Ohio

The war between Britain and France (1744-8), arising out of the War of the Austrian Succession, gave the rival colonists a chance to fly at each others' throats; nor, indeed, did they cease their strife when the official peace was proclaimed in 1748. During the war the New England colonists captured Louisbourg; but this important conquest unfortunately had to be given up at the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle in exchange for Madras. The French, meanwhile, had been very active in Nova Scotia, where they were continually stirring up their ex-colonists to rebel against British rule. Halifax, a British town, was founded to counteract French influence (1749); and then the British Government took the extreme step of deporting several thousand Frenchmen from Nova Scotia to other parts of British North America.

First  
capture of  
Louisbourg;  
1745

Halifax

The threat to British interests was increased by the building (in 1753) of Fort Duquesne, on the Ohio, within striking distance of the British colonies. Fort Duquesne completed the chain of French forts from the Gulf of St. Lawrence to the Gulf of Mexico. The governor of Virginia, Dinwiddie, recognized the seriousness of the menace, and sent out a young colonial officer, named George Washington, to take Fort Duquesne (1754). But Washington was outnumbered, and forced to retreat. Next year the home government dispatched General Braddock to America, to drive the French from the Ohio. The French, however, with some Indian allies, ambushed Braddock and his little army in the woods. The British were marching in column, according to the drill-book; Braddock refused to take Washington's advice and order his men to scatter to the

Fort  
Duquesne  
1753

Braddock's  
defeat  
1755

woods. The result was that most of them were killed, including the general. Washington drew off the survivors, and retired to Virginia.

Such was the position of the rival colonists in North America at the outbreak of the Seven Years War (1756). In some respects the advantage appeared to lie with the French. Their colonists were traders and hunters rather than settlers, and they were used to fighting; the whole French Empire in America, with its defensive forts, was founded on a military basis. Besides this, the French had many Indians on their side, for they had been far more tactful in their dealings with these potential allies. But, in spite of these facts, it was impossible that North America should pass into French hands; the whole number of French settlers was only 80,000; the British colonists outnumbered them by 25 to 1. It was not likely that, with such small numbers, the French could permanently prevent their rivals from expanding across an empty continent. As for their military preparations, these were counteracted by the fact that the British held command of the sea, and so were able to prevent French reinforcements from being sent to North America.

## 2. *The Seven Years War*

### (i) *British Defeats: 1756-7.*

The seizure of Saxony by Frederick the Great precipitated a European war. The French realized that this would mean for them a struggle with Great Britain in all parts of the world—a struggle for which their colonists in America and India were quite prepared. In all the ports of France naval preparations were hurried forward, for much depended on striking a blow at Britain's naval supremacy.

The first blow was struck in the Mediterranean. In April 1756, without a declaration of war, a French fleet sailed from Toulon and landed a force on the island of Minorca. Port Mahon, the capital, was besieged. Admiral Byng, with a small British fleet, was at Gibraltar. He sailed to Minorca to see what he could do, engaged the French fleet in battle, but was unable to effect a landing. He sailed back to Gibraltar to refit his

The rival  
colonists  
compared

The French  
take  
Minorca  
1756

ships, and while he was away Port Mahon fell. There was a howl of popular rage in England when the news arrived; Newcastle was terrified and decided to sacrifice Byng. The admiral was tried by court martial for failing to relieve Port Mahon; he was condemned to death and shot on board his own quarter-deck. Of this shameful affair Voltaire caustically wrote in *Candide*: 'Dans ce pays ci [England] il est bon de tuer, de temps en temps, un amiral, pour encourager les autres.' On the admiral's tombstone it is written that 'bravery and loyalty were insufficient securities for the life and honour of a naval officer'.

Admiral  
Byng  
1757

Meanwhile the French had sent to Canada the able Marquis de Montcalm as military commander. Montcalm drove the British from Fort Oswego, their solitary station on the Great Lakes, and then prepared to advance from Lake Champlain. But here the British forts held him up, and it was lucky for the colonists in New York that they did. In the same year the English in India suffered the loss of Calcutta, and the outrage of the Black Hole. The only bright spot was that Newcastle resigned in December (1756).

Montcalm  
in Canada  
1756

The Pitt-Devonshire ministry, which lasted during the first four months of 1757, was followed, after a short interval, by the famous Pitt-Newcastle ministry, which saved England and won an Empire. As Pitt was not firmly in the saddle till the latter part of 1757 he was not able to do much that year, which, in fact, was almost one long record of disaster. Cumberland had been sent with an army to Germany, where he was soundly beaten by the French and forced to sign the Convention of Kloster-Seven, by which he had to evacuate Hanover. In America the army of regulars and colonials made no progress against Montcalm. The situation, as it appeared at the end of 1757, was thus gloomily summed up by Lord Chesterfield: 'We are undone at home and abroad. The French are masters to do what they please in America. We are no longer a nation. I never yet saw so dreadful a prospect.' Chesterfield's remarks perhaps represented the general feeling of depression; Pitt was more sanguine.

Pitt in  
power  
1757-61

Even that winter the tide began to turn. Frederick won the greatest of all his victories at Rossbach (Saxony) over the

Rossbach

French, which sent a thrill of pride throughout Germany. And from India came the amazing news of Clive's victory at Plassey, 1757, which gave the vast province of Bengal to the East India Company.

(ii) *The Victorious Years: 1758-60—Canada.*

Pitt's organization of the war began to take effect in 1758. His measures may be summed up as follows. First, he re-organized the Navy, and sent squadrons to blockade the French Atlantic ports, and so prevent reinforcements from being sent to America. A similar watch was kept, by the Gibraltar squadron, on the Mediterranean. This sound strategy was followed up by raids on the French coasts; Cherbourg was captured and its forts destroyed (1758). Secondly, Pitt, who had once condemned the employment of British troops in Hanover, now added a British army to the German forces under the Duke of Brunswick's command, and so helped to clear the French out of Hanover. Money was poured out to enable Frederick the Great, now hard pressed, to continue the struggle. Thus Pitt kept France busy in Europe. 'We shall win Canada', said Pitt, 'on the banks of the Elbe'. Thirdly, while Frederick was defending Prussia against Austrians, Russians, French, and Swedes, Britain launched her offensive against the French colonial empire. This, as far as Britain was concerned, was the main effort of the war, and it depended on her keeping command of the sea. The French were unable to save their stations in India, where they steadily lost ground. They lost also Senegal and Goree, in West Africa, and with these places fell the whole French slave-trade. Another British expedition was sent to the West Indies, and took Guadeloupe (1759). Meanwhile, in order to reverse the situation in North America, a great assault on Canada was planned.

Canada  
1758-60

The attack was planned along three lines of advance:

1. A naval and military expedition to Louisbourg, the capture of which was an essential preliminary to an advance up the St. Lawrence.
2. An advance up the Hudson valley towards the forts on Lake Champlain, and thence to the St. Lawrence.

3. An attack on Fort Duquesne, and thence to the Great Lakes.

In 1758 the first of these attacks was a brilliant success. A fleet under Admiral Boscawen brought an attacking force



THE SEVEN YEARS WAR IN NORTH AMERICA

(under Amherst and Wolfe) to Cape Breton Island: the famous fortress of Louisbourg fell, and so the way was opened to the estuary of the St. Lawrence. On land the main advance up Lake Champlain was a failure, for General Abercrombie sustained a bloody repulse before Ticonderoga at the hands of Montcalm. But a detachment of Abercrombie's army advanced up the Mohawk (tributary of the Hudson) and took Forts Oswego and Frontenac, on Lake Ontario. At the same time Brigadier Forbes, pushing across to the Ohio, found Fort

Second  
capture of  
Louisbourg  
1758

Duquesne abandoned and burnt. Forbes renamed the place Fort Pitt. 'I have used the freedom', he wrote to Pitt, 'of giving your name to Fort Duquesne, as I hope it was in some measure the being actuated by your spirit that now makes us masters of the place.'

Fort Pitt  
(Pittsburg)  
1758

The next year—1759, the year of victories<sup>1</sup>—witnessed one of the best-known incidents in British history. A British fleet of 170 ships, under Admiral Charles Saunders, was sent up the St. Lawrence, conveying the army of General James Wolfe, the brilliant young commander whom the genius of Pitt had picked out from among his seniors. The problem was to reach the French forts (which guarded Quebec) on the Heights of Abraham, towering above the river. The army was disembarked under cover of darkness, and while part of the fleet opened a bombardment to distract the defenders, the Heights of Abraham were scaled. The sailors, who had found a path up the apparently inaccessible cliffs, led the way up, carried the ammunition and small guns, and placed Wolfe and his army on the Heights. This amazing feat was carried out in the dim light of dawn; the French defenders were therefore taken completely by surprise. Both Montcalm and Wolfe were mortally wounded, but Wolfe lived to hear that the French were routed. Thus Quebec fell into the hands of the British (September 1759).

Quebec  
1759

The French tried to recapture Quebec during the winter, but failed to do so. After this the end was only a matter of time. The other British lines of advance, from Lake Champlain and Lake Ontario, were now pushed forward; the French were obliged to concentrate all their defences on Montreal. The converging attacks advanced on the town, and it fell (1760); and with it fell the French dominion in North America.

Fall of  
Montreal  
1760

While the British were occupied with the conquest of Canada, the French planned a counter-attack—nothing less than an invasion of England. During the summer of 1759 the French navy strained every nerve to break the blockade of their ports. At last the Brest fleet got out. Then, in November 1759, Admiral Hawke swept down on the enemy among the rocks

<sup>1</sup> Horace Walpole, son of Sir Robert, wrote: 'It is necessary to enquire every morning what victory there is, for fear of missing one.'



A CONTEMPORARY PRINT OF WOLFE'S CAPTURE OF QUEBEC

The Heights of Abraham are, of course, much higher in reality than they appear in this imaginative picture.

The British Empire in 1763 The conflict between the colonial empires of France and Britain thus came to an end with the almost total destruction of the former. The future of North America, as of India, lay in the hands of men of the British race. But the enormous triumph of Britain almost at once gave rise to misgivings. Was it too complete? Could Britain hope to keep all she had gained, or prevent France from plotting a war of revenge? There were some, even in 1763, who foresaw the answer to these questions. And scarcely had the peace with France been signed when our colonists in America began to assert their desire for independence. The French flag had vanished from North America, but with it went the need for the British colonists to rely any longer on the protection and support of the mother country. 'England', said a French observer, 'will soon repent of having removed the only check that could keep her colonies in awe.' This prediction proved to be correct. Both the American War of Independence and the Maritime War of the same period, by which France obtained her revenge for 1763, were the indirect results of the victory which Britain gained in the Seven Years War.

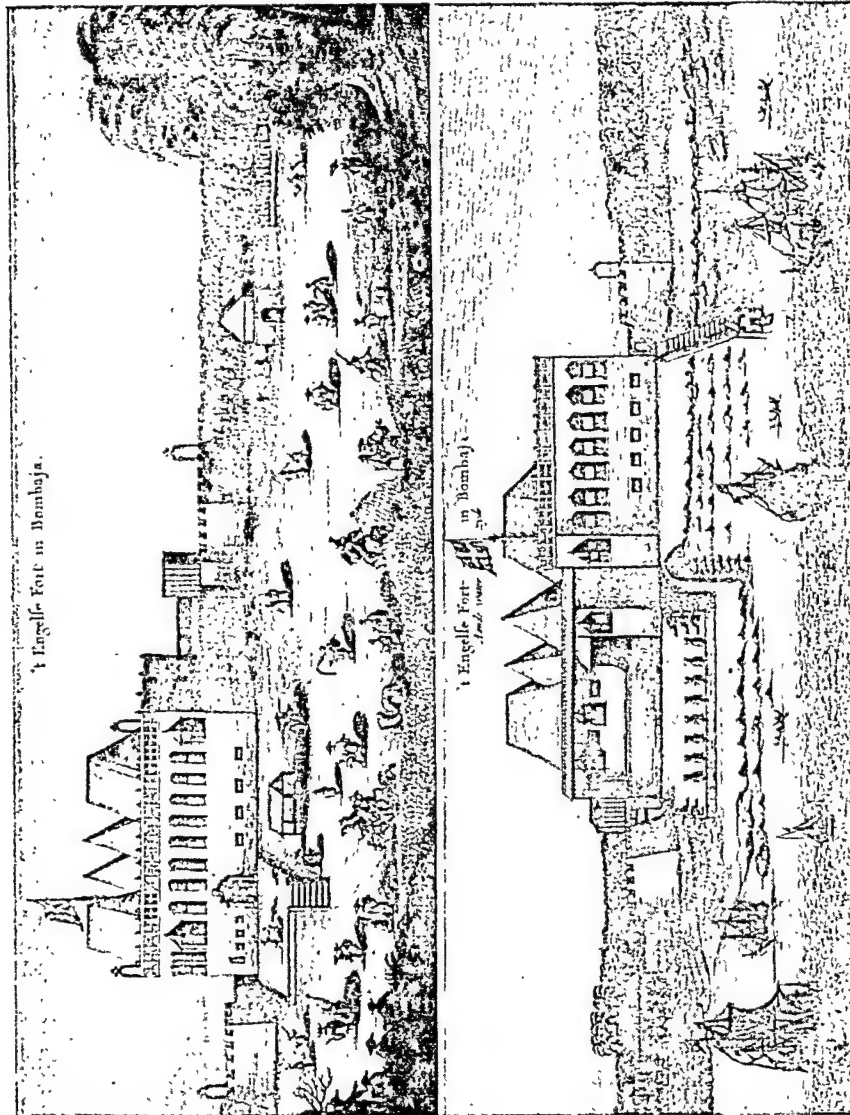
### 3. *Clive in India*

#### (i) *The Struggle in the Carnatic.*

The Anglo-French struggle in India took place at the same time as that in other parts of the world. It was considerably affected by the weakness which was sapping the native government of India. This weakness was the result of the break-up of the Mogul Empire after the death of the Emperor Arungzebe (1707), the last of the Moguls who was able to keep his wide dominions together under one rule. His successors retained but a shadow of the former power of the Moguls; soon their authority was limited to a small district round the capital, Delhi.

Break-up of the Mogul Empire The viceroys who ruled the six great provinces into which the Empire was divided became, to all intents and purposes, independent sovereigns. But the process of disintegration went further still; for the nawabs (Hindustani for princes) of the smaller provinces asserted *their* independence of their superiors. To add to these disruptive tendencies, the power of the





# THE BRITISH IN INDIA

A Dutch print of 1720, showing Bombay Fort from the land and from the sea. The district of Bombay in which the original Fort stood is still called 'The Fort'.

The  
Mahrattas

Mahratta Confederacy<sup>1</sup> had become a terror to central India, from the Ganges to the Godavari, from the Bay of Bengal to the Arabian Sea. Their trade was war and plunder, and, says Macaulay, 'wherever their kettle-drums were heard, the peasant threw his bag of rice on his shoulder, hid his small savings in his girdle, and fled with his wife and children to the mountains or the jungles, to the milder neighbourhood of the hyaena and the tiger'.<sup>2</sup> Most of the Mohammedan rulers were too weak to resist these formidable foes; the whole country, dissolving into anarchy, was ready to welcome any power which could offer the blessings of peace and protection. No one could have imagined that it was the destiny of a European trading company to unite India under one rule, still less that it would accomplish this task in less than a hundred years.

The French  
in India

Dupleix  
1741-54

The French and English East India Companies were for many years solely concerned with questions of trade. The anarchy of India at first alarmed them and then fired their ambitions. The French, like the English, had trading-posts on all the coasts of India; the chief were Mahé on the Malabar coast, Pondicherry and Karikal in the Carnatic, and Chandernagore in Bengal. Pondicherry was the Company's head-quarters, and there, in 1741, came Joseph François Dupleix as governor-general. Dupleix had large views on imperial affairs, and he was a fervent patriot; his first thought, quite naturally, was to weaken his English rivals. The outbreak of war between Britain and France (1744) gave him the chance to attack Madras, which fell after making but a feeble resistance (1746). The opportune arrival of a French fleet from Mauritius, under Admiral La Bourdonnais, helped to hasten this event. But, to Dupleix's disgust, Madras was returned to the British at the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle, as the French Government considered it of less value than Louisbourg, for which it was exchanged.

His Indian  
policy

It was in the same year that events in southern India turned the thoughts of Dupleix in another direction. His soldiers, recently employed in the attack on Madras, were now standing idle—but what might not well-trained French soldiers do in

<sup>1</sup> A group of five Hindu princes, each with his own capital and head of a marauding tribe of light horsemen.

<sup>2</sup> Macaulay, *Essay on Clive*.

India? Dupleix saw that they might do a great deal. He determined to use them in joining in the frequent wars between the



INDIA IN THE TIME OF CLIVE

native princes. In this way French military aid could be made to turn the scale in native quarrels, and the French Company would become the arbiter of southern India, perhaps of the whole of India. These immense schemes which floated before

Dupleix's mind were afterwards written down in his *Memoirs*, in which he strove to justify his policy; they seemed absurd to the directors of the French Company. But the British, in the next generation, turned Dupleix's dreams of European conquest of India into a reality.

At first all went as well as Dupleix could wish. The Nawab of the Carnatic was killed in battle by a usurper called Chunda Sahib, who gained the victory with the aid of 400 French soldiers. Chunda Sahib was enthroned as Nawab of the Carnatic (1749), but he relied on Dupleix to maintain his position; in fact he was as much a puppet of the French Company as, later on, the nawabs of Bengal were of the English. In 1751 another usurper was installed, by the same means, as Nizam of the Deccan; this was an even greater triumph, since the Nizam was the most important prince in southern India. The new Nizam gave Dupleix a high-sounding title and recognized his control over his vassal, the Nawab of the Carnatic. Dupleix's ambitions seemed about to be realized.

His failure was due, in a large measure, to the hostility of the British, and especially to the genius of Robert Clive. Clive was a young man who had come out to India (1745) as a clerk in the East India Company; but his natural daring and pugnacity could ill support a sedentary life. He had taken a commission in the army during the last war, and now suggested to the governor of Madras a bold stroke against the ambitious Frenchman. There was only one town holding out against Chunda Sahib and his French allies, and that was Trichinopoli, in the south of the province. Here Mohammed Ali, a son of the late nawab, had taken refuge; the town was being besieged by the French and the present nawab. Clive volunteered to lead a British force to Arcot, the capital of the province, and so draw Chunda Sahib's army away from the siege of Trichinopoli. The plan succeeded; Clive took Arcot, and defended it for fifty days with a handful of men against an army of several thousands. The defence of Arcot not only had the desired effect of relieving Trichinopoli, but raised the prestige of the British to a level with that of the French. From this time the Indians began to doubt the invincibility of Dupleix and his Frenchmen, which had hitherto been unquestioned.

The next year Major Lawrence, assisted by Clive, forced a French army to surrender before the walls of Trichinopoly. Matters were going badly for Dupleix; he had spent a great deal of money, and yet his schemes were being ruined by English interference. But he still had an army in the Deccan, and did not despair of retrieving his position in the Carnatic. The French Company, however, took a more serious view of the situation, and they determined to recall their governor-general. He was superseded (1754) and forced to return to France, where his great services were unrewarded and he was left to die in poverty.

Trichinopoly, 1752

Recall of Dupleix 1754

His successor made a formal treaty of peace with the English; but this peace was not of long duration, owing to the outbreak of the Seven Years War. Clive was engaged in the conquest of Bengal,<sup>1</sup> and in his absence the French made a final effort to drive the British from the Carnatic. They did not succeed. Their new military leader, the Comte de Lally, son of an Irish Jacobite, was a brave soldier but a bad commander; he quarrelled with practically all the French officials in India. He was not as skilful as Dupleix in diplomacy and he recalled the French troops from the Deccan. Relying, as he did, on French military efficiency rather than on intrigues with the natives, he was hampered by lack of supplies, which could not be brought in so long as England retained command of the sea. He was forced to abandon the siege of Madras (1758) when an English fleet appeared off the coast. In 1760 Lally encountered the main British army under Sir Eyre Coote at Wandewash, half-way between Pondicherry and Madras. The victory went to the British, and Lally retired to Pondicherry. The British blockaded the town by land and sea, and it had to surrender (1761). Lally was taken a prisoner to Madras.

Lally in the Carnatic

Wandewash

Fall of Pondicherry 1761

These events decided the fate of the French in India. When the Treaty of Paris came to be signed, Pondicherry and their other towns were restored to them, but, on Clive's suggestion, a clause was inserted forbidding the French to keep armed forces in India. Henceforth they had to use their possessions as trading stations only. The field of expansion in India was thus left clear for the English Company.

End of the French power in India

<sup>1</sup> See next section.

The Comte de Lally was treated by an ungrateful country even worse than Dupleix—or Clive. He was accused of having sold Pondicherry to the English, unjustly convicted of treason, and beheaded (1766).

(ii) *The Conquest of Bengal.*

The fertile plain of Bengal, with its teeming population, did not become a scene of European conflict until the outbreak of the Seven Years War. The British, French, and Dutch stations on the Hooghli—Calcutta, Chandernagore, and Chinsura—lay within thirty miles of each other, but they remained at peace, both with each other and with the native rulers of Bengal. This state of affairs was altered by the action of a new nawab, Surajah-Dowlah (Siraj-ud-Daula), who succeeded to the throne of Bengal in 1756.

Surajah-Dowlah was a degenerate youth who conceived a violent hatred of the British. He marched against Calcutta and took the town. Some of the defenders escaped by water, but 146 prisoners were shut up in the infamous 'Black Hole', a small guard-room, from which only 23 survivors emerged alive (June 1756). The remaining residents took refuge twenty miles down the river. Surajah-Dowlah retired to his capital, imagining that he had heard the last of the British.

When the news from Bengal reached Madras the governor decided to send an expedition to recover Calcutta. A fleet of five ships under Admiral Watson conveyed Colonel Clive with 900 British and 1,500 native troops (sepoys) to Bengal. The fleet sailed up the Hooghli, and Calcutta was retaken. Shortly afterwards the British attacked the French station at Chandernagore by land and water, and the garrison surrendered.

The British expedition had now accomplished all and more than it had set out to do. But with Clive inaction was impossible, and events in Bengal invited interference. Though British relations with the nawab were outwardly friendly, Clive formed a conspiracy<sup>1</sup> with Meer Jaffer, a great noble of

<sup>1</sup> Omichand, a native used by the British as a go-between, tried to levy blackmail under threat of divulging the conspiracy. Thereupon Clive, considering that 'art and policy were warrantable in defeating the purposes of such a villain', had two copies of the treaty with Meer

the nawab's court, to overthrow Surajah-Dowlah. At last the nawab, suspecting treachery, decided to attack the British once more. Clive was ready for him at Plassey with an army of 3,200 men, British and natives; the nawab's army numbered 50,000. Clive waited some time before deciding to attack, since his chances of success depended on the expected treachery of Meer Jaffer. Surajah-Dowlah, however, brought about his own ruin by ordering a retreat; Clive fell on the demoralized Bengalees, and confusion spread through their ranks. Plassey was not a battle; it was a panic-stricken rout. The English lost 20 men, the Bengalees perhaps 500. Meer Jaffer's contingent took no part in the action.

Plassey  
1757

After the rout of Surajah-Dowlah's army the English entered Murshidabad, the native capital, and installed Meer Jaffer as nawab. Surajah-Dowlah was killed by Meer Jaffer's son. The new nawab had promised to pay £1,000,000 to the Company in compensation for their losses at Calcutta, and considerably more than that sum in gratuities to Clive and other Englishmen. It was found, however, that the Bengal treasury did not contain the requisite sum; Meer Jaffer was therefore obliged to make the payments by annual instalments. The British completed their triumph by capturing Chinsura, the Dutch station on the Hooghli. Clive returned to England in 1760, and was rewarded for his services with a peerage.

Meer  
Jaffer,  
Nawab of  
Bengal

He was away from India for five years, and during his absence the Company's officials worked their will in Bengal. Their conduct left much to be desired; they regarded Bengal as a place to make their fortunes, regardless of the welfare of the natives. In fact, the welfare of the natives was no business of theirs: they had power without responsibility—always a dangerous combination. The nawab was forced to make laws favouring British traders at the expense of his own subjects. Finally the British deposed him, and set up his son-in-law, Meer Kasim, in his stead.

Bengal  
1760-5

Meer Kasim was treated in the same way as his predecessor, and was soon driven into revolt against his masters. Warren Hastings, a member of the British Council in India, warned Jaffer drawn up, one of which contained a false promise to Omichand. (The story of this intrigue can be read in Macaulay's *Essay on Clive*.)

his fellow members that they were making themselves 'lords and oppressors' of Bengal, but his warning went unheeded. The Council deposed Meer Kasim, who had proved too independent for its liking, and set up Meer Jaffeer again. Meer Kasim fled to Oudh, where he joined forces with the nawab of that province, and with the Mogul emperor. These allies attempted to drive the English from Bengal, but were heavily defeated by the Company's forces at the battle of Buxar, the most complete victory yet won by an English army in the East (1764).

Battle of  
Buxar, 1764

Clive's last  
visit to  
India  
1765-7

Shortly after this Clive was requested by the East India Company to return to Bengal. Great as Clive's former services had been, they were not comparable to the task which he now undertook, which no other man could have attempted, and in which he was largely successful. His mission was to effect a revolution in British dealings with India and put an end to the methods of extortion by which British officials had grown rich out of native weakness. First he took advantage of the victory of Buxar to conclude the Treaty of Allahabad, by which the Mogul granted the *diwani* (i.e. the right of collecting and administering the revenue) for the provinces of Bengal, Berar, and Orissa to the British. At the same time Clive forbade private trading and the taking of presents by the Company's servants, whose salaries were raised to make up for the losses which these new regulations entailed. But it was impossible to abolish corruption at one stroke, and many abuses crept back after Clive's departure.

Treaty of  
Allahabad  
1765

Clive met with much opposition in his dealings with the Company's officials and in his efforts to introduce a new and more honest standard. His own dealings with Meer Jaffeer in 1757 (before Plassey) were not unnaturally brought up against him, but that did not deter him from pursuing what he now thought to be the right course. But he made many enemies, who followed him to England when he retired two years later.

It was partly through the machination of these men that Clive, on his return, was attacked in Parliament. He was accused before a Parliamentary Committee of having received bribes from Meer Jaffeer during his first governorship of Bengal. He defended himself with his usual spirit, and contended that

Clive before  
Parliament  
1772



he had received no more than his right, and, further, that he might have helped himself to much more had he so chosen. He described the gold, silver, and jewels which he had seen in the treasury of the nawab's gorgeous palace at Murshidabad. 'By God, Mr. Chairman,' he exclaimed, 'at this moment I stand astonished at my own moderation!' This line of argument was scarcely convincing; the Committee came to the conclusion that Clive had been guilty of receiving sums of money from native rulers. But lest this verdict should appear to reflect too harshly on the honour of one who had served England so well, the Committee added the famous rider: 'Robert, Lord Clive, did at the same time render great and meritorious services to his country.'

Two years later Clive committed suicide. His health had long been poor, and was not improved by the knowledge that many of his countrymen regarded him as a tyrant. As a soldier and administrator Clive stands head and shoulders above his contemporaries. He made mistakes, but his mistakes were never the outcome of weakness. It is impossible to imagine what the history of India would have been without him. His life was passed in scenes of action, in the course of which he had to make many momentous decisions, but, right or wrong, he was never known to hesitate. Some may question the morality of Clive's actions, but none can doubt his genius.

Death of  
Clive, 1774

## XXVIII

### GEORGE III AND THE LOSS OF AMERICA

#### I. *The King's Friends*

George III  
1760-1820 WHEN George III succeeded his grandfather as king, the Whig oligarchy had been ruling England for nearly fifty years. It was the fixed intention of the young king to break the power of this oligarchy, and to substitute for it a non-party government, in which the personal wishes of the sovereign would play a far greater part than under the first two Georges. This programme was largely inspired by the political theories of Bolingbroke, as embodied in that writer's *Patriot King*.<sup>1</sup> George III had been trained by his mother, Augusta, Princess of Wales, to regard the duties of kingship with great seriousness; His Education 'George, be a king' was her constant advice. She herself had been educated, not in England, but at a small German court (Saxe-Gotha) where the absolutism of the ruler was still unquestioned. She chose as her son's adviser a Scottish nobleman, the Earl of Bute.

There were several circumstances which favoured the overthrow of the Whigs. Their system of government was unpopular in the country; even Pitt, the greatest of Whig ministers, openly despised the methods by which his party ruled England. Besides this, there was no longer any reason Revival of the Tories for Tories to be excluded from power, as they had been since the death of Queen Anne. The old charge of Jacobitism, which in earlier days had been levelled with some justice against the Tories, no longer held good. The Pretender and his son were exiles, and all thought of restoring them had now been abandoned. The Tories, therefore, transferred their loyalty to the king himself, the avowed enemy of the Whig oligarchy.

Character of George III There was much in the character of George III to attract the loyalty of his subjects. He had been brought up as an English gentleman, and in tastes and manners he looked the part. English was his native tongue, and he was in all respects

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 587.

a striking contrast to his two German predecessors. His love of England, and his devotion to what he conceived to be her interests, were genuine. 'Born and educated in this country,' he said in his first Speech from the Throne, 'I glory in the name of Britain.' Such sentiments naturally evoked feelings of affection, and these feelings were strengthened by the virtues of the young king. George III was free from the vices for which his grandfather and great-grandfather and his own sons were notorious; his private life was without scandal. He was a model son, a devoted husband, and an indulgent father. His tastes were those of a simple country gentleman, and his subjects admired him for them—'Farmer George' he was affectionately nicknamed.

His Virtues

The defects of the king's character were less obvious, but they were none the less profound; and no other sovereign in modern times has—although with the best intentions—inflicted such deep injuries upon his country. The most marked trait in his character was obstinacy. He aspired to be the leader of his people, but he was in truth only the leader of the most unenlightened section of them. He opposed, often successfully, every movement of reform which was suggested during his long reign. He opposed the reform of Parliament, the relaxation of the Irish commercial laws, and the emancipation of Roman Catholics; and he supported the Slave Trade. Above all, his obstinate attitude towards the American colonies did much to embitter that controversy, and to prolong the struggle.

His Defects

The king began his attack on the Whigs by informing Newcastle that he proposed to take the patronage of the Crown into his own hands. This was the most serious blow that could have been struck at Newcastle's power; the General Election of 1761 returned, for the first time for half a century, a House of Commons in which the 'placemen' were not dependent on the Whig ministers. Henceforth the king could rely on a solid body of personal supporters in the Commons. These men looked, not to the Prime Minister of the day, but to the king, for their reward in places and pensions; and the king soon proved himself quite as competent at bribery as any Whig. So was formed that political party which received the name of the King's Friends. George also insisted on his friend Lord

The King's  
Friends

for the  
Northern  
Dept. Bute entering the Cabinet as a Secretary of State. Pitt, as we have seen, resigned (October 1761) on the question of the Spanish war, and Newcastle survived his colleague only a few months. When he resigned (1762) the long reign of the Whigs was over. The king at once made Lord Bute First Lord of the Treasury. Bute was an amiable and cultivated Scottish gentleman, but he had no gifts of leadership. The chief work of his ministry was to make peace with France and Spain by concluding the Treaty of Paris (1763). Bute negotiated peace with France behind the back of our ally, Frederick the Great of Prussia, so that Britain was left without a friend in Europe. The peace was unpopular in the country, since it was alleged that the terms should have been more favourable to Britain than they were. Bute became the victim of a scurrilous newspaper campaign, led by John Wilkes, editor of a paper called the *North Briton*. All the popular prejudice against Scotsmen was called in to aid this campaign. Bute endured it in silence for a time, and then resigned (1763).

This was a serious set-back to the king's plans, and he was forced to find ministers from among the Whigs. That once great party was now divided into sections following various leaders, of whom the chief were George Grenville, the Duke of Bedford, and the Marquis of Rockingham. Pitt, whom the old Whig leaders all hated, remained aloof. A ministry was formed with Grenville as Prime Minister, supported by the Duke of Bedford, with whom Pitt had refused to serve.

The ministry of George Grenville, a diligent but small-minded man, is chiefly remembered for the passage of the Stamp Act (1765), which opened the American controversy.<sup>1</sup> At the time, however, this did not attract so much attention as the Wilkes case. John Wilkes, the outspoken editor of the *North Briton*, was soon to be the hero of London. No. 45 of his paper contained a reference to the King's Speech on the recent peace treaty. The paper said that the king had given 'the sanction of his sacred name to the most odious measures and to the most unjustifiable public declarations from a throne ever renowned for truth, honour and unsullied virtue'. George III considered that this was an accusation of personal falsehood;

<sup>1</sup> See next section.

he insisted that the author or authors should be prosecuted for seditious libel. Accordingly a general warrant (i.e. one mentioning no names) was issued against the 'authors, printers and publishers' of the *North Briton*; under this Wilkes and forty-eight other persons were arrested. Wilkes claimed that, as a member of Parliament, he could not be arrested for libel; and also that there was no evidence that he was author or publisher of No. 45. Lord Chief Justice Pratt upheld the former plea, and Wilkes was released.<sup>1</sup>

The House of Commons, however, took a different view. By a considerable majority the House declared that Parliamentary privilege did not extend to libel, ordered No. 45 of the *North Briton* to be burnt by the common hangman, and later expelled Wilkes from the House. He was wounded in a duel, and fled to France, not waiting to face the main charge of libel. He was outlawed by the Court of King's Bench when he failed to answer the charge (1 November 1764). He was, however, to be heard of again.

Wilkes  
expelled  
from the  
House  
1764

Grenville's ministry was now extremely unpopular, owing to the storms which had arisen in America over the Stamp Act and in England over the Wilkes case. The king also detested his Prime Minister, and was heard to declare: 'I would sooner meet Mr. Grenville at the point of my sword than let him into my cabinet.' In 1765 Grenville resigned, and was succeeded by Lord Rockingham, leader of another section of the Whigs. Rockingham's ministry lasted only one year; it repealed the Stamp Act and declared that general warrants were illegal. But the king disliked Rockingham, and was anxious to form another ministry as soon as Pitt would agree to join.

Rocking-  
ham's  
Ministry  
1765-6

Great things were expected of Pitt, who was now created Earl of Chatham and became head of a 'non-party' ministry. Unfortunately, however, the great minister was already in the decline of his power. He suffered terribly from gout, and the ravages of this disease overclouded his mind. He shut himself up in his house, and refused to communicate with his colleagues,

Ministry of  
Chatham  
1766-8

<sup>1</sup> Numerous legal actions were afterwards brought by Wilkes and other persons arrested in 1763 under the general warrant. Lord Chief Justice Pratt decided that general warrants were illegal, and this decision was upheld by Lord Mansfield in 1765.

half of whom spent their time quarrelling with the other half. After two years of this confusion Chatham resigned and the Duke of Grafton became the nominal head of the ministry. <sup>and</sup> Grafton was a young man of little merit, quite incapable of leading the country or of combating the growing influence of the king and the King's Friends. Charles Townshend was Chancellor of the Exchequer, and proposed the famous taxes which further embittered the relations between the American colonies and Britain.<sup>1</sup>

In 1768 Wilkes returned to England and stood as a candidate for Parliament. He was chosen by the electors of Middlesex, but Parliament declared him incapable of sitting. He stood again for Middlesex, and was again returned. The House ordered a third election; Wilkes was opposed by a certain Colonel Luttrell, whom he defeated by a four to one majority. The House, now clearly going beyond its rights, declared that Colonel Luttrell was the member for Middlesex. This monstrous decision produced riots in London, and Wilkes was the hero of the hour. His popularity showed that Parliament was dangerously out of sympathy with the people whom it was supposed to represent. Meanwhile the ministry was attacked in the anonymous *Letters of Junius*, which contained violent attacks on Grafton and his colleagues. The authorship of these *Letters* has never been discovered.

It was during this unhappy state of public affairs that the genius of Edmund Burke produced one of the masterpieces of political writing. Burke was an Irishman who had become secretary to Lord Rockingham. Though he never held high office he was the most influential political thinker in Britain in the eighteenth century. His *Thoughts on the Cause of the Present Discontents* was written in 1769, and published the following year. It contained a careful analysis of the political situation, and a condemnation of the growing power of the Crown. Burke was a loyal Whig, and an enthusiast for the 'Glorious Revolution' of 1688; he viewed with dismay the decline of his party since the accession of George III. He failed to see that the Whig was not the only possible party, and he overlooked the fact that the Whigs were deservedly unpopular after half a century of

<sup>1</sup> See next section.

government by bribery and corruption. He regarded the latter as an unfortunate incident of the Whig régime and one which ought to be removed. [Burke was correct in observing that the Crown was in process of recovering its ancient power, and he expressed a genuine and justifiable alarm at the spectacle of the King of England entering into politics and forming a party of his own.

Meanwhile George III had, on Townshend's death, introduced Lord North into the Cabinet as Chancellor of the Exchequer. North was a Tory, and a staunch supporter of the royal power, and thus a most acceptable person to the king. In 1770 George accepted Grafton's resignation, and North became Prime Minister. At last the king had his own way. He had got rid of the Whigs, and had a servant who was content to be a nominal chief minister; the real Prime Minister was George III. The rule of the king and Lord North lasted twelve years (1770-82). Their period of power, though successful in many other ways, was marked by the outbreak of the American War and the loss of the Thirteen Colonies.

Rule of  
George III  
and Lord  
North  
1770-82

## 2. *The Quarrel with America*

In order to understand the causes of the quarrel with the American colonies we must glance back several years. There had always been a section of colonial opinion hostile to the influence of Britain. In New England especially, the colonists were the descendants of men who had fled from Stuart England as religious exiles; they could not be expected to regard Britain with any particular affection. Besides this, the colonies were, in most important respects, already self-governing, and it was evident that the inhabitants chafed under such British control as they had to endure. It had, indeed, long been obvious to acute observers that this was so. Lord Cornbury, governor of New York in Anne's reign, had said of the colonists: 'If once they can see they can clothe themselves without the help of England, they—who are already not very fond of submitting to government—would soon think of putting into execution designs they have long harboured in their breasts.'

Attitude  
of the  
American  
Colonists  
to Britain

One particular cause of grievance was the economic system of the old Colonial Empire. In common with all European

The  
Mercantile  
Empire

powers who held overseas possessions, Britain treated her colonial market as a monopoly. The colonial system had been carefully worked out in Stuart times,<sup>1</sup> when Charles II's Navigation Act (1660) had been passed. The colonists had to import manufactured goods—e.g. woollen and hardware articles—from Britain, and not from other countries. On the other hand the coffee, sugar, rice, and tobacco consumed in Britain could only be bought in the British colonial market. This colonial code, as even its greatest critic (Adam Smith) admitted, was considerably less harsh than the colonial systems of other European states. It brought great benefits to the colonies, as well as disabilities, as they well knew, but they were prone to accept the benefits and chafe under the disabilities. They smuggled goods from France, Spain, or the Spanish colonies whenever they found it convenient to do so. What was required was a careful and friendly consideration of a system already more than a century old, and by this time in need of adjustment; what happened was a series of unfortunate quarrels, leading to a final and complete rupture.

Effects  
of the  
Conquest of  
Canada  
1763

The overthrow of the French power in Canada was a turning-point in the history of America. It was prophesied at the time<sup>2</sup> that, now all fear of the French was removed, the American colonists would break away from Britain; they would bring to an end a state of dependence which some of them had long resented and which they now felt to be no longer necessary.

George  
Grenville

These prophecies were speedily fulfilled. The peace with France was signed in 1763; in the same year George Grenville, whose fate it was to begin the quarrel with America, became Prime Minister of Great Britain. Grenville, who had no suspicion of the storm he was about to arouse, began by tightening up the old commercial system (1764); he enforced the Navigation Acts, whose working had become lax, and made some attempt to put down colonial smuggling, by which the Acts were evaded. Next, he proposed to station a force of 10,000 men in America (a quarter of this force to go to the West Indies, the remainder to the Thirteen Colonies) for the defence of the colonies against a possible French attack and against the Red Indians. Rather less than half of the cost of this defence force,

<sup>1</sup> See above, Chapter XXII.

<sup>2</sup> See above, p. 608.



he suggested, should be borne by the colonists, and raised by a stamp duty on legal documents. He gave the colonists a year to consider the matter; the Stamp Act was not passed through the British Parliament till 1765.

There was nothing at all unreasonable in Grenville's proposal; the tax was light, and it was proposed to spend the revenue derived from it, not in England, but on the defence of America. Nevertheless, the tax aroused a storm of opposition in America, and, in fact, could not be collected. The colonists denied the right of the British Parliament, sitting at Westminster, to impose 'internal' taxes. They raised the cry: 'No taxation without representation'; but, in fact, they did not really wish to be represented in the Westminster Parliament, nor, in eighteenth-century travelling conditions, would such a thing have been practicable for a country 3,000 miles away. The main effect of the proposed taxation was to create a united opposition in America; delegates from nine of the thirteen colonies met at New York (1765) to protest against the Stamp Act.

Scarcely any one in Britain was prepared for this opposition, and to Grenville himself it came as a surprise. He resigned next year, owing to differences with the king, and Lord Rockingham succeeded him. Rockingham's policy was largely influenced by Burke, who sympathized with the colonists. Pitt also spoke against the Stamp Act, and the government decided to repeal it. At the same time, however, a Declaratory Act was passed, saying that Great Britain had the *right* to tax the colonies. The wisdom of this last step was at least doubtful. But, in any case, much harm had been done; henceforth any attempt at interference on the part of Britain was likely to meet with a renewed opposition.

Next year, when the so-called Chatham Ministry was in power, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Charles Townshend, decided to increase the revenue by levying a tax on tea, and on certain manufactured articles (chiefly glass and paper) entering American ports (American Import Duties Act). This Act met with the same reception in America as Grenville's proposal. There were riots in many colonial towns, especially in Boston, the capital of Massachusetts, which from now on

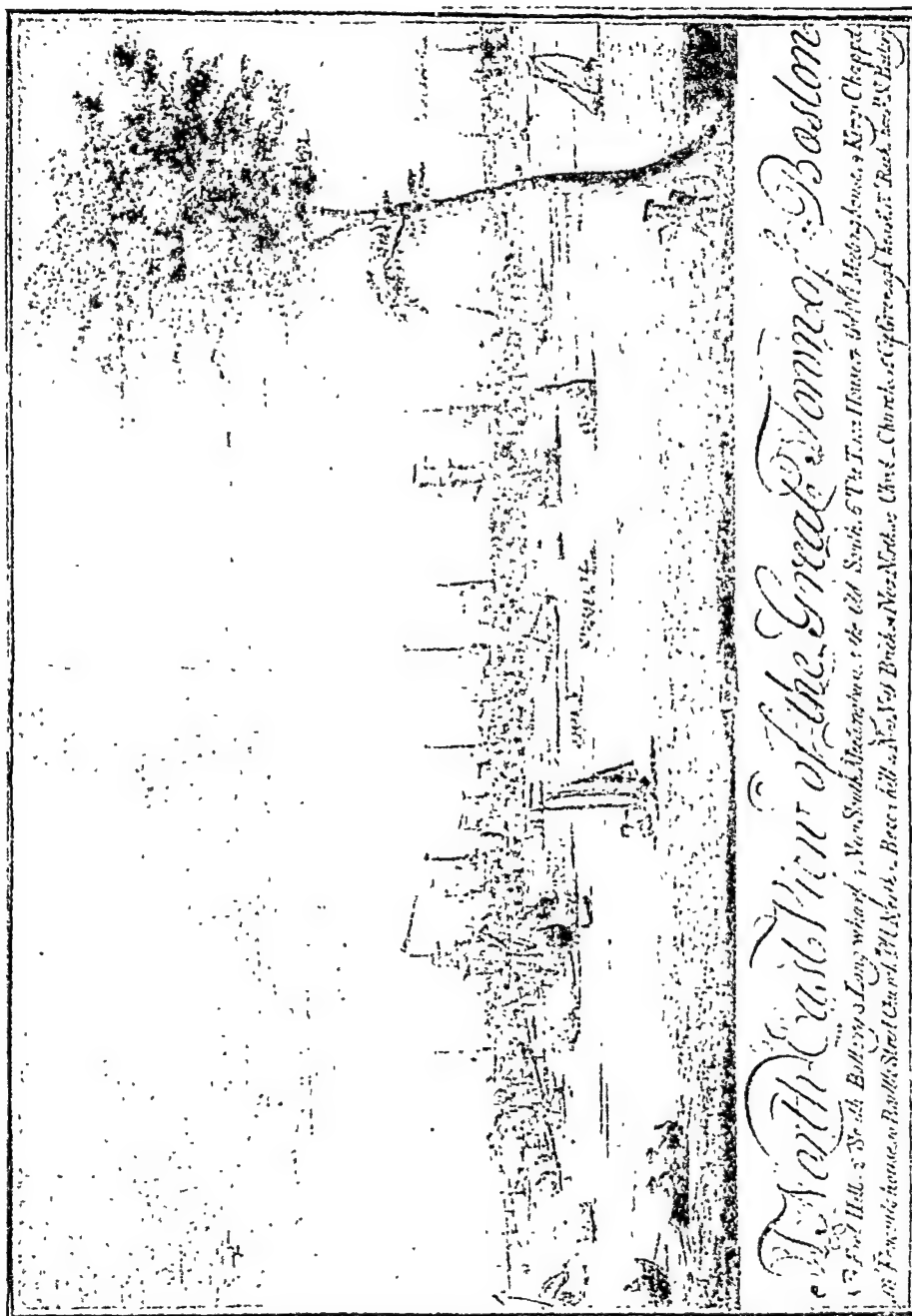
Stamp Act  
1765Opposition  
to the  
Stamp ActRepeal of  
the Stamp  
Act, 1766American  
Import  
Duties Act  
1767

took the lead in opposing the British Government. Four thousand British troops were quartered in Boston—nearly a quarter of the number of the civil population. At home, Parliament passed resolutions condemning the disloyalty shown in Massachusetts, and an address was sent to the king thanking him for the measures he had taken to safeguard Britain's interests.

Attitude of British statesmen But British statesmen were by no means united in their view. Burke warned the Government that it was proceeding on a perilous course, and Chatham spoke against the policy of taxing the colonies. 'I rejoice', he said, 'that America has resisted.' In the Cabinet Grafton had succeeded Chatham as nominal head of the ministry, and North had succeeded Townshend as Chancellor of the Exchequer. Grafton was in favour of abolishing all the recent taxes, but after a debate the Cabinet decided to retain that on tea (March 1770). Thus the whole question remained unsettled.

George III and Lord North, 1770 In the same year North succeeded Grafton, and the personal government of George III began. The minister was too weak-willed and easy-going to resist the commands of his royal master, and the king himself assumed the chief responsibility for dealing with the colonists. His unbending temper was soon brought face to face with the equally unbending attitude of his overseas subjects. In 1773 North introduced a new Tea Act. Hitherto the East India Company had been compelled to sell its wares by public auction in London; merchants, English and American, had then had the handling of the tea. The new Act allowed the Company to send its tea direct to America and sell it there, and so crush the private dealers. The fact that the Act (by granting the Company a refund of British duties) would halve the price of tea to American consumers was not sufficient to outweigh the hatred of the Company's monopoly. Hostile demonstrations were held; and in Boston Harbour a party of men disguised as Red Indians boarded the East India Company's ships and threw the chests of tea into the sea. The news of this 'Boston Tea Party' was received with rage in England.

Boston Tea Party, 1773 The Government at once adopted strong measures. The Acts against Massachusetts 1774 port of Boston was declared closed, and a Massachusetts



## THE AMERICAN COLONIES

A view of the 'great town' of Boston about 1720.

Government Act was passed, which practically annulled the charter (1774). In the same year the Quebec Act extended the boundary of Canada to the Ohio, and granted to the French Canadians the free exercise of their religion (as Roman Catholics). Several of the colonies had harsh laws in force against Roman Catholics, so that this concession to the Canadians, tolerant and statesmanlike as it was, gave great offence, especially to the Puritans of Massachusetts. In the same year the first American Congress, representing all the thirteen states except Georgia, met at Philadelphia. The delegates declared for a general stoppage of trade with Britain until grievances should be redressed. At the same time they forwarded a protest to the British Government and demanded the repeal of the recent Acts.

Next year the first blood was shed. General Gage, in command of the British troops in Boston, sent out some men to prevent the colonists collecting military stores. There was some firing between the British regulars and the colonial militia at Lexington and Concord. After this the British did not venture out of Boston, for the whole of Massachusetts was in complete revolt.

Meanwhile a second American Congress was held, and a petition, known as the Olive Branch Petition, was sent to King George, containing an offer to return to the position of 1763, but denying the legislative power of the British Parliament. The King and the Cabinet, however, were now bent on coercing the rebels and, indeed, preparations for war were already far advanced on the American side. The same Congress which sent the Olive Branch Petition appointed Colonel Washington, who had seen some service in the Seven Years War, as General and Commander-in-Chief of the American Army. George Washington was a Virginian planter, a man of quiet tastes and averse from publicity. But he was also a man of inflexible will, one who was incapable of turning his back on a task to which he had devoted himself. His acceptance of the command did much to rally Virginia and the Southern States to the side of New England, where the centre of the revolt lay. The appointment of General Washington was in itself a considerable step towards the achievement of victory.

### 3. *The War of American Independence*

The British army which was sent out to reconquer the rebellious colonies was under the command of Sir William Howe, a soldier of no particular ability. Howe took up his quarters at Boston, bringing 10,000 reinforcements to the troops already there. Soon after his arrival the first main engagement of the war took place. The town of Boston was built on a peninsula, connected with the mainland by a narrow isthmus called Boston Neck. But the Neck and the town itself were dominated by the Charlestown Hills and Dorchester Heights. The Americans seized a position near Bunker Hill. Howe now drove them from this position but they retired in good order.

General  
Howe

Bunker  
Hill  
1775

Meanwhile the Americans tried to invade Canada, and sent a force up the Hudson and Lake Champlain route. This army arrived at Quebec, and delivered an attack, which, however, was beaten off by Sir Guy Carleton, the energetic Governor of Canada. The failure of this expedition decided the fate of Canada.

Invasion of  
Canada  
1775

Washington, during the latter part of 1775, had taken command of the American army before Boston. Howe permitted him to occupy Dorchester Heights which, like Bunker Hill, overlooked the town, which the Americans proceeded to bombard. After this Howe was compelled to evacuate Boston, which he did, bringing off his troops by sea to Halifax (Nova Scotia), March 1776.

Evacuation  
of Boston  
1776

In the same year the third American Congress met at Philadelphia and drew up the famous Declaration of Independence (4 July 1776). The Declaration summed up the case for independence in the following words:

The Third  
American  
Congress

‘We hold these truths to be self-evident:—“That all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. That to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed; that, whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new government, laying its foundations on such principles . . . as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness”.’

Declaration  
of Independence  
4 July, 1776

Then came the declaration

'that these United colonies are, and of right ought to be, Free and Independent States; that they are absolved from all allegiance to the British Crown, and that all political connection between them and the State of Great Britain is, and ought to be, totally dissolved.'

The scene of the war, meanwhile, had shifted to the Middle Colonies. Howe landed on Long Island, and drove Washington's army from its defensive position there, after which the British occupied New York, which they held for the rest of the war. Howe also took Philadelphia, but he did not follow up his success by pursuing the American army westward. Washington and his army settled down at Valley Forge, Pennsylvania, for the winter. The American army numbered rather less than 4,000 men; Howe's forces were at least 10,000. The British general seemed to be quite unaware of the desperate straits to which the Americans were reduced, but which we can read of in Washington's dispatches. His men were almost destitute of supplies: 'few men (he wrote) have more than one shirt, many only the moiety of one, and some none at all'. A large proportion of the men were barefoot, so that 'their marches might be traced by the blood from their feet'. There was never enough to eat; the men, ill clothed and half starving, had to endure the fierce cold of December in this appalling condition. Half the army melted away—from sickness or desertion. But the remainder held on, faithful to their general, who never gave up hope in the darkest hour. It says much for the character and perseverance of Washington that he was able to maintain an army in the field under these conditions. He was saved by the incompetence of the British general, which matched, if anything could match, the incompetence of the colonial authorities in providing food and clothing for their own men.

It is certain that, had the British possessed a general with initiative, Washington's starving army might easily have been wiped out at Valley Forge. The Americans were fortunate, not only in having George Washington as a general, but in having no one of the same quality to oppose him. In 1777 the British made a grave miscalculation, which decided the issue of the

New York  
taken, 1776

Washington  
at Valley  
Forge,  
1776-7

war. It was determined to send an army southward from Canada, under General Burgoyne, to join forces with Howe. It was essential to the success of this plan that a detachment of Howe's army should come northwards from New York to meet Burgoyne. But instead of effecting a junction with Burgoyne, Howe employed all his men in fighting a campaign in the Middle Colonies. There he won the battle of Brandywine Creek and captured Philadelphia (Sept.). Meanwhile, when Burgoyne advanced down the Hudson valley, he found himself surrounded by a hostile population, and by a rapidly increasing American army. His position, without reinforcements, was hopeless, and the reinforcements never came. He therefore surrendered with his whole force of 3,500 men at Saratoga, 17 October 1777.

Burgoyne's  
army

Surrender  
of Saratoga  
1777

The news of Saratoga was received in Europe at Christmas. It at once decided the French government to take up the cause of the colonists, and to form an alliance with them. In 1778, therefore, Britain and France were at war. The effect of this was decisive, since the French Navy opened an attack on the West Indies, which had to be defended at the same time as the French hampered our communications with the mainland of America. The actual fighting force sent by France to America was of little use till nearly the end of the war; but the French naval action crippled Britain and made it impossible for her to reconquer the colonies. Further, American privateers also attacked British ships, and one adventurous captain, Paul Jones, even landed on the coast of Scotland, and then captured two British ships off Scarborough (1778).

France  
declares  
war, 1778

Paul Jones

In the midst of these calamities died William Pitt, Earl of Chatham, who had lived to see the Empire, which he had raised to the first place in the world, brought to the verge of disruption, and the enemy, whom he had struck so low, rise up again to take her revenge.

Death of  
Chatham  
1778

Next year (1779) Spain joined France, and the two powers attacked Britain in the Mediterranean, where Gibraltar and Minorca were besieged. The French also sent a fleet to attack Britain in India,<sup>1</sup> and in 1780 Holland joined the ranks of our foes. Britain, therefore, had to fight this Maritime War against

The Mari-  
time War  
1778-83

<sup>1</sup> See below, Chapter XXXIV.

632      GEORGE III AND THE LOSS OF AMERICA      [CHAP.  
the other naval powers of Europe, to defend Gibraltar, the West  
Indies, and India, and at the same time to carry on the war



WAR OF AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE AND THE MARITIME WAR

against the colonists. In these circumstances it is scarcely surprising that she lost the Thirteen Colonies. Disputes also arose with other European powers over the question of the rights of neutrals. Neutral powers claimed that they had a



right to trade with belligerents and that neutral ships could carry any goods save certain 'contraband of war', specified by treaty. The British Navy searched ships for contraband and sometimes went farther and tried to interfere with peaceful trade, and so extend blockade law beyond its natural limits. Russia, Sweden, Denmark, and other states now bound themselves together in an Armed Neutrality, threatening to declare war if their rights as neutrals were not respected.

The Armed  
Neutrality

In America, Howe was superseded by Sir Henry Clinton, who decided to extend the war into the southern colonies. Charleston, the capital of South Carolina, was captured, and Lord Cornwallis, who was in charge of the campaigns, won several battles in North and South Carolina (1780). In spite of these successes, however, Cornwallis was not strong enough to hold the southern colonies. Next year he advanced to Yorktown, in Virginia, with 7,000 men. Washington was now joined by a French army under General de Rochambeau, and these allies laid siege to Yorktown. At the same time, a French fleet, under Admiral de Grasse, entered Chesapeake Bay, and blockaded Yorktown from the sea. Cornwallis, thus cut off from help by water, was besieged on land by a Franco-American army which outnumbered his by more than 2 to 1. His position was hopeless, and in October 1781 he surrendered.

War in the  
Southern  
Colonies

Surrender  
of York-  
town, 1781

#### 4. *The End of the Old Empire*

The long tale of disaster from America was received month by month by a despondent British nation. The king became very unpopular; in 1780 the Commons carried a motion that the 'influence of the Crown has increased, is increasing, and ought to be diminished'. It was at the beginning of the same year that London was for four days at the mercy of a wild anti-Catholic mob, led by a crack-brained fanatic called Lord George Gordon. The Gordon Riots were caused by the introduction of a Bill in Parliament, providing some relief for the Roman Catholics. Wild scenes were enacted; shops, factories, and breweries were broken into or destroyed—the last with baleful effect on the mob—while Catholic chapels were burnt to the ground. The riots were at last quelled by the personal intervention of the king, who took the responsibility of ordering

The  
Gordon  
Riots, 1780

the military to charge on the mob. These disgraceful scenes revealed the undercurrent of savagery which lay beneath the surface of eighteenth-century London, then unprotected by a proper police force.

The fall of Yorktown ended the war in America; even the king began to see that further hostilities against the colonists would be useless. Lord North insisted on resigning (1782). It was a bitter moment for the king, and for a short time he talked of abdicating his crown and retiring to Hanover. There was nothing to do but call in the Whigs, whose avowed purpose it was to end the war and recognize the independence of America. George III, therefore, reluctantly consented to Lord Rockingham's forming a ministry.

Meanwhile, the war against France and Spain was continued, and some welcome victories saved what remained of the British Empire. Though Minorca fell (1782), the French and Spaniards failed to take Gibraltar, which was brilliantly defended by its commander, Sir George Elliott. Equally cheering was the great victory ('Battle of the Saints') won by Admiral Rodney over the French off the islands of Les Saintes, near Dominica, in the West Indies, which restored British naval power in the Atlantic (1782). In the following year it fell to the Whig ministry to make a general peace.<sup>1</sup>

During the short Rockingham Ministry (February-July 1782) Burke's Economic Reform Bill was passed, by means of which the number of sinecures given to 'placemen' in the House of Commons was drastically cut down. At last a blow was struck at the power by which the Whigs themselves had formerly ruled England, and which George III had employed for the past twenty-two years. Fox, the greatest of the Whig ministers, wished to go farther and abolish the rotten boroughs, but he could not carry his party with him; his violent opposition to the king's personal influence also earned him the hatred of George III. When Rockingham died (July 1782), therefore, George gave the premiership, not to Fox, but to Lord Shelburne. Fox and Burke thereupon resigned from the Cabinet.

<sup>1</sup> The Shelburne Ministry negotiated the treaty and signed the preliminaries: the final treaty was signed by the Fox-North Ministry (see Chapter XXXI).

Shelburne, who held office for a year, was a Whig, but was regarded by the king as the lesser of two evils, the greater being Fox. The new Premier was a man of exceptional ability, but he did not inspire confidence; his enemies nicknamed him the 'Jesuit of Berkeley Square'. The chief work of his ministry was to make a general peace with all our enemies.

By the First<sup>1</sup> Treaty of Versailles, the war was brought to an end on the following terms:

Treaty of  
Versailles  
1783

1. Great Britain acknowledged the independence of the United States of America. She secured a promise that Congress should recommend to the various states the restoration of property confiscated from the Loyalists. But this 'recommendation' was ignored by the States, and the Loyalists were vindictively persecuted by the Americans. Many of them sought new homes in Canada and Nova Scotia.<sup>2</sup>
2. The boundary between Canada and the U.S.A. was fixed at its present line, and not (as in 1774<sup>3</sup>) at the line of the Ohio. The boundary west of the Great Lakes was left for future determination.
3. France received back her West African settlements Gorce and Senegal, and the islands of Tobago and St. Lucia in the West Indies.
4. Spain received Florida and Minorca, which she had lost in 1763 and 1713 respectively.

The year 1783 thus marked the point at which the two main branches of the Anglo-Saxon race came to the parting of the ways. For Great Britain, this meant the end of a colonial policy pursued through a century and a half of commercial competition and war. The Old Colonial Empire had fallen, and the new Empire which was gradually built up to take its place developed on different lines. In the opinion of an American historian, the first British Empire 'was doomed to be broken asunder, but it was brought to that disaster by the insistent demand of Englishmen in America for the full enjoyment of those liberties which England fostered beyond any other country in the world'.

End of the  
Mercantile  
Empire

<sup>1</sup> The Second Treaty of Versailles (1919) ended the Great War.

<sup>2</sup> See below, Chapter XXXIV.

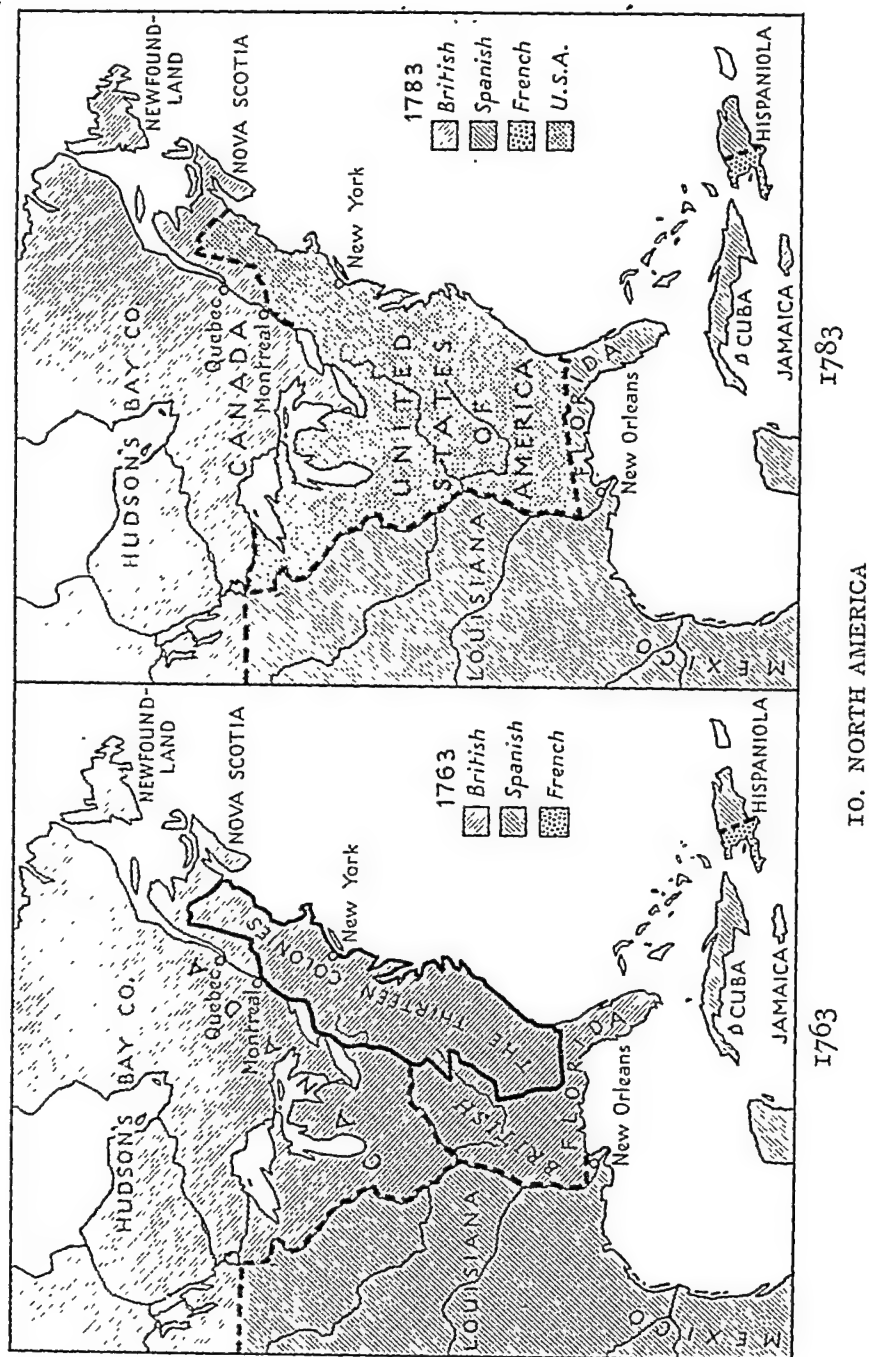
<sup>3</sup> See above, p. 628.

The U.S.A. For our former colonies, now the United States, independent development was just beginning. Great difficulties lay ahead of the infant American nation. That America survived, and became a great Power, was due in the first instance to the guiding hand of George Washington, and his friend Alexander Hamilton. In 1787 a Convention met to draw up the constitution of the United States; Washington was chosen as the first President. He first took office in 1789,<sup>1</sup> the year in which the French Revolution burst upon Europe. While this storm was raging in the Old World, Washington and his advisers had the hard task of trying to weld thirteen different and differing states into a nation.

In Britain, the loss of the colonies meant, as we have seen, the end of the personal government of George III. It could not be expected that the sovereign under whose rule the British Empire had been split in two could any longer retain the confidence of his subjects. Fits of insanity, which increased in duration as the years went by, clouded George III's declining years; and though he emerged once or twice into the political arena (as when he forbade the granting of religious freedom to Ireland), he never again became the formidable figure he once had been. Soon the chief power passed into the hands of Chatham's son, the young William Pitt, under whose leadership Britain was governed for close on twenty years. It was during those years that Britain built up a new commercial prosperity, regained her position as the first power in Europe, and laid the foundations of a new Empire.

New era in  
British  
history  
begins

<sup>1</sup> The President's term of office is four years. Washington served two periods of four years, but refused to serve a third term, an example which has been followed by all his successors.





# DATE SUMMARY: WAR AND EMPIRE (1756-83)

BRITAIN	AMERICA AND INDIA	EUROPE
	SEVEN YEARS WAR (1756-63)	
1756 Newcastle resigns	1756 Montcalm in Canada	1756 French take Minorca
1756-7 Devonshire Ministry		
1757 Execution of Admiral Byng	1757 ✕ Plassey, CONQUEST OF BENGAL	1757 ✕ Rossbach
1757-61 PITT-NEWCASTLE MINISTRY	1758 Louisbourg and Fort Duquesne	
	1759 FALL OF QUEBEC	1759 ✕ Quiberon
1760 George II d.	1760 Fall of Montreal	1760 Russians enter Berlin
1760-1820 George III	✕ Wandewash	Rousseau's <i>Contrat Social</i>
	1761 Fall of Pondicherry	
1761 Pitt resigns		1762 England at war with Spain
1762 Newcastle resigns		1762-96 Catherine the Great (Russia)
1762-3 Bute Ministry	1763 TREATY OF PARIS ends Seven Years War	
THE QUARREL WITH AMERICA (1763-75)		
1763-5 Grenville Ministry	1764 ✕ Buxar	
1764 Wilkes' Case, Hogarth d.	1765 Treaty of Allahabad	
Hargreaves' Spinning Jenny	1765 STAMP ACT	
1765-6 Rockingham Ministry	1765-7 Clive in India (3rd visit)	
1766 <i>The Vicar of Wakefield</i>	1766 Repeal of Stamp Act	
1766-8 Chatham Ministry	1767 American Import Duties Act	
	1768-79 Cook's Pacific Voyages	
1768-70 Grafton Ministry		
1768-9 Middlesex Election (Wilkes)		
1768 <i>Royal Academy</i>		
1769 Burke's <i>Present Discontents</i>		
Watt's Steam Engine		
Garrick's Shakespeare Festival		
1770 Wordsworth born	1770 BOTANY BAY	
1770-82 North Ministry	1773 Boston 'Tea Party'	1772 First Partition of Poland
	North's Regulating Act (India)	
	1774 Quebec Act	1774-92 Louis XVI
AMERICAN WAR OF INDEPENDENCE (1775-83)		
	1774-85 WARREN HASTINGS	
1776 Gibbon's <i>Decline and Fall</i>	1775 ✕ Bunker Hill	
Adam Smith's <i>Wealth of Nations</i>	1776 DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE	
	1777 Saratoga	
1778 Chatham d.	1778-83 Maritime War	1778 Voltaire d.
1780 Gordon Riots		1780 Empress Maria Theresa d.
Irish Commercial laws repealed		
1782 North resigns	1781 Surrender of Yorktown	
1782 (Feb.-July) Rockingham Ministry	1782 'Battle of the Saints' (Rodney)	
Irish Parliament		
1782-3 Shelburne Ministry		
1783 (Apr.-Dec.) Fox-North Coalition		
1783 (Dec.) William Pitt, Pr. Min.	1783 TREATY OF VERSAILLES ends war with France, Spain, and America	

## XXIX

### . THE AGE OF WESLEY AND DR. JOHNSON

#### I. *The Writers*

ENGLAND in the eighteenth century was a land of strange contrasts; and if we look at it through the eyes of the men whose names stand at the head of this chapter we shall see two very different worlds. Paradoxically enough, Johnson, who was uncouth in manners and appearance, moved in a highly cultivated society; Wesley, who was a man of far greater polish than Johnson, passed most of his long life in scenes of squalor and human suffering. Let us glance first at Dr. Johnson's England.

The Power  
of the Press

The reigns of Anne and the first three Georges, which fill the eighteenth century, were notable for a remarkable growth in both the power and the volume of the printed word. At the death of George I there were three daily and five weekly newspapers in London, and by the middle of the century every important provincial town had its local newspaper. The *Gentleman's Magazine*, for long a most popular weekly publication, first appeared in 1731. 'The people of Great Britain', said a writer in 1738, 'are governed by a power that never was heard of as a supreme authority in any age or country before. It is the government of the Press. The sentiments of these scribblers have more weight with the multitude than the opinion of the best politician in the kingdom.'<sup>1</sup> This, it must be remembered, was written years before the art of reading was a universal accomplishment.

Robinson  
Crusoe and  
Gulliver's  
Travels

The reading public, however, was growing. The great writers of Queen Anne's day—Addison, Swift, and Defoe—still flourished in the reign of her successor and their works achieved immense popularity. Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*, which appeared in 1719, is one of the greatest works of fiction in the English

<sup>1</sup> This is of course an exaggerated statement. The power of the press was first really demonstrated by *The Times* of Barnes (Editor from 1807) and Delane (Editor from 1841). But the career of Wilkes shows that the printed word had a great deal of influence even in the eighteenth century.



language. Few writers have excelled Defoe in power of realistic description—for example in the account of the discovery of the footprint in the sand, or in Crusoe's first meeting with Man Friday. Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*, like *Crusoe*, is a tale of adventure; and, though it was intended as a satire on English society, it may be read with pleasure as a good story.

The eighteenth century saw also the birth of the English novel. *Pamela*, which was published in 1740, was written by Samuel Richardson,<sup>1</sup> a middle-aged printer, and took the form of letters supposed to be written by a servant-girl. The success of *Pamela* led to the publication of *Clarissa Harlowe*, by the same author, in eight solid volumes. About the same time, Henry Fielding, a barrister, wrote *Joseph Andrews*, a novel which was shortly followed by his masterpiece, *Tom Jones*. In *Tom Jones* we see the life of the eighteenth century as Fielding knew it; his Squire Western is painted from the life—the full-blooded, foul-mouthed country squire, who passed his days in hunting and his nights in drinking. For a more sober picture of country life we can turn to Oliver Goldsmith's *Vicar of Wakefield*, which appeared twenty years later. Goldsmith's story is written with a desire to improve the mind; but it has neither the fire nor the artistic merit of *Tom Jones*. Goldsmith was also the author of a famous comedy, *She Stoops to Conquer*. A later playwright, whose works (e.g. *The School for Scandal*) are still performed, was Richard Sheridan, who portrayed the doings of polite society, with its interminable chatter and its preoccupation with trifles.

The  
English  
Novel

Tom Jones

The Vicar  
of Wakefield

Goldsmith  
and  
Sheridan

The eighteenth century was one of the greatest periods in our history, but there was something stiff and formal about it. This formality is reflected in the poetry of the age, especially in the writings of Alexander Pope (1688–1744), its greatest exponent. Pope was the arbiter of English taste for many years. His translation of Homer was widely read and his *Essay on Man* contains some of the best-known epigrams in the English language.<sup>2</sup> Pope wrote in the heroic couplet, a regular, formal metre

<sup>1</sup> Tobias Smollett, author of *Roderick Random*, and Laurence Sterne, author of *Tristram Shandy*, were other novelists of this period.

<sup>2</sup> e.g. 'Hope springs eternal in the human breast.' 'The proper study of mankind is man.' 'Order is Heaven's first law.'

which exactly suited his style. He expressed the spirit of his own generation perfectly. 'If Pope be not a poet', said Dr. Johnson, 'where is poetry to be found?' The remainder of the century—until the French Revolution—was much dominated by Pope's influence. It produced no other great poets except Gray, the author of the famous *Elegy in a Country Churchyard*, Burns, who wrote in the Scots vernacular, and Blake, an isolated prophet. But Blake and Burns should be regarded as forerunners of the 'Romantic Revival rather than as poets of the eighteenth century'.<sup>1</sup>

The second half of the century produced the greatest historian who has ever written in the English language. Edward Gibbon (1737-94) was born at Putney of well-to-do parents; his comments on his parentage (in his *Autobiography*) are highly characteristic of the man and of the age: 'My lot might have been that of a slave, a savage or a peasant; nor can I reflect without pleasure on the bounty of Nature, which cast my birth in a free and civilized country, in an age of science and philosophy, in a family of honourable rank, and decently endowed with the gifts of fortune.' He was a precocious boy, and his prodigious learning was the result of his own exertions. The fourteen months which he spent at Magdalen College, Oxford (aged 15), he describes as 'the most idle and unprofitable of my whole life'. He gives a devastating, though probably exaggerated, account of the life of the Magdalen dons—'decent easy men, who supinely enjoyed the gifts of the founder; their days were filled by a series of uniform employments; the chapel and the hall, the coffee-house and the common room; till they retired, weary and well satisfied, to a long slumber. From the toil of reading, or thinking, or writing, they had absolved their conscience.'<sup>2</sup> Gibbon's own life was the opposite of all this. He was a born scholar, and read widely—Greek, Latin, French, and English authors. Though some have quarrelled with his prejudices, none have ever questioned the soundness of his learning, which, considering the vast scale of his work, was stupendous. His great book, the *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (published 1776) covers thirteen centuries of European history, from the Age of the Antonines

<sup>1</sup> See below, p. 698.

<sup>2</sup> Gibbon, *Autobiography*.

(c. A.D. 150) to the fall of Constantinople (1453). Gibbon was one of the greatest masters of the English language. His incomparable style must be studied to be appreciated; his grand prose seems to march on from page to page, from chapter to chapter, like the conquering armies of the Romans he so much admired.

Another very typical—perhaps the most typical—product of the age was Samuel Johnson (1709–84). Johnson had not the advantage, which Gibbon notes with so much satisfaction, of being born of wealthy parents. His father was a struggling Lichfield bookseller, and though Samuel was sent to Pembroke College, Oxford, he had to leave without taking a degree; his father died in poverty shortly afterwards. Johnson, after teaching at a private school, went to London to seek his fortune, and scraped a living as a journalist. Among other employments, he wrote the account of the Parliamentary debates for the *Gentleman's Magazine*. When he was nearly forty, he was commissioned to write a Dictionary, the publication of which brought him fame.

In his later middle age and old age, Johnson was the centre of an admiring literary circle in London. His immense learning, his scathing wit, and his downright judgements on every subject under the sun, made him the best-known character in town. His extraordinary personality still lives in the pages of Boswell's *Life of Johnson*. This biography contains not only the most minute account of the sayings and doings of one man ever written, but also gives a faithful picture of that eighteenth-century London society in which the Doctor lived. Boswell, says Macaulay, 'is the first of biographers. He has no second. He has distanced all his competitors so decidedly that it is not worth while to place them.' Boswell was consumed with a passion for noting down the sayings of the great; his enormous industry has made the figure of Dr. Johnson one of the most familiar in our literature. The brilliant pen-picture which Macaulay painted of the Doctor was derived from a reading of Boswell. Everything about Johnson, says Macaulay, is familiar to us—

'his coat, his wig, his figure, his face, his St. Vitus' Dance, his rolling walk, his blinking eye, the outward signs which too clearly

marked his approbation of his dinner . . . his inextinguishable thirst for tea, his trick of touching the posts as he walked, his mysterious practice of treasuring up scraps of orange peel, his morning slumbers, his midnight disputations, his gruntings, his puffings, his vehemence, his insolence, his fits of tempestuous rage.<sup>1</sup>

No man so hardy as to dispute with the Doctor when he was roused—or woe betide him! One Sir Adam Ferguson ventured to express the opinion that in English politics it was important to preserve a balance against the Crown. The Doctor, who was a strong Tory, settled the matter at once. ‘Sir,’ he said, ‘I perceive you are a vile Whig. Why all this childish jealousy of the power of the Crown? The Crown has not power enough!’

## 2. *The Arts and the World of Fashion*

Fielding, in *Tom Jones*, has drawn a picture of the coarse-minded country squire, which has often been taken as typical of the eighteenth century. But the hunting squire, who was drunk every night of the week, was after all but one type, though a common one; there were also a good many country gentlemen who passed their time in cultured pursuits, and spent their money collecting books, pictures, and furniture. This type is perhaps the best product of the age; it could exist only in a country which was peaceably governed, and where one class at any rate had sufficient wealth to indulge its tastes for the fine things of life. As we look at the country mansions of Georgian England, their parks and gardens, their pictures and their furniture, we can form some idea of the age, not only of Dr. Johnson, but of Gainsborough, Wedgwood, and Chippendale.

Architecture Sir Christopher Wren died in 1723; the Renaissance architecture, which he had done so much to popularize, was the favourite style in England for another hundred years. The best architects of the eighteenth century were Sir John Vanbrugh, who designed Blenheim Palace as a residence for the Duke of Marlborough; James Gibbs, who built the Senate House at Cambridge and the Radcliffe Library at Oxford—one of the noblest buildings in England; Nicholas Hawksmoor, who built the quadrangle of Queen’s College, Oxford, one of

<sup>1</sup> Macaulay’s description, abridged.



EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY ENGLAND

The world of literature. Mr. and Mrs. Thrale entertaining Dr. Johnson to tea at their house at Richmond.  
(From the painting by Zoffany in the possession of the Earl of Durham.)

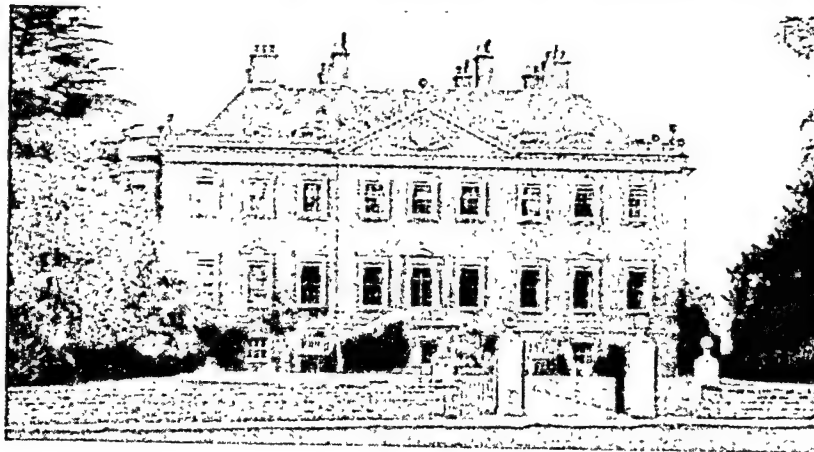
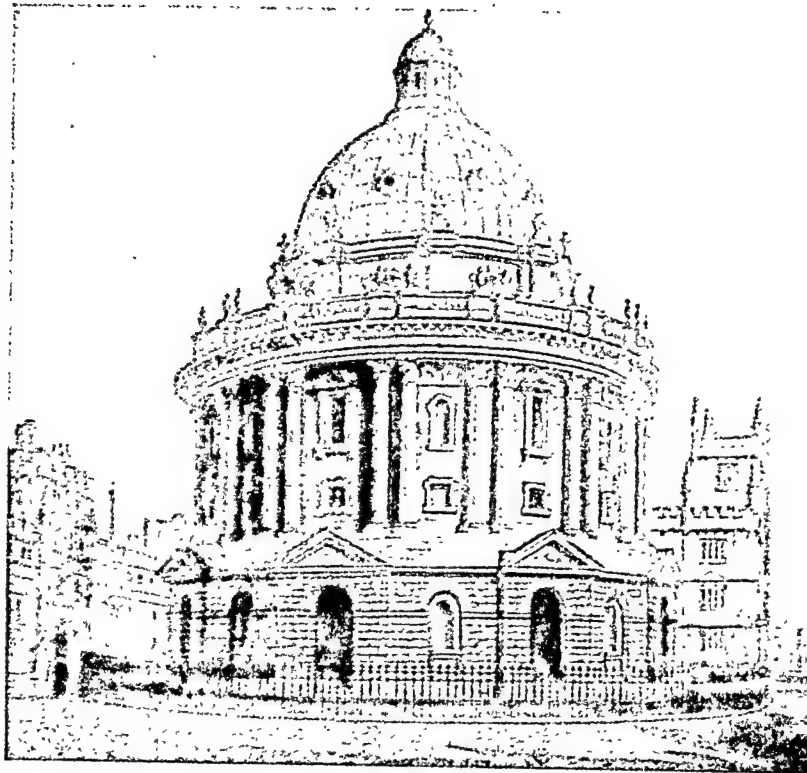
the chief ornaments of the famous High Street ; and John Wood of Bath,<sup>1</sup> who was responsible for some of the buildings which have made that beautiful and dignified city unique among English towns. Later architects were the brothers Adam, who designed not only many beautiful houses in London and elsewhere, but furnished them with fine interior panelling, and with the famous Adam fire-places. The eighteenth century is a great period of English architecture; the planning and building of Bath was a great achievement, unfortunately not imitated elsewhere, except at Cheltenham. But the growth of London westward from Hyde Park also furnished an opportunity for the erection of those stately buildings which still beautify the city, and which the modern Londoner (of the suburbs) may well envy. And all over England country houses were being built of brick or stone, while the familiar Georgian brick-front can still be seen in every old town in the country.

After the house, the garden. The eighteenth century was a great gardening age, and during it many of our most beautiful parks were laid out; thousands of acres, too, of new forests were planted. In gardening, we may distinguish two main periods. In the first, the formal garden, which was much in favour under William III (and so is often called the Dutch garden), took pride of place. Trees were carved into fantastic shapes, masses of yew or box were tidily clipped and arranged in symmetrical patterns, and the flower-beds were laid out in geometrical designs. This formal style, however, gave way to a novel type of landscape gardening. Now sculptured hedges and neat walks were discarded. Nature was all the rage, and the landscape-gardener tried by imitating the great original to conform to Nature's plan. Defoe, describing the garden of a great house he saw in Essex, says: 'The Walks and Wilderness go to such Distance, and in such a Manner, up to the Hill, that the Sight is lost in the Woods adjoining, and it looks all like one continued planted Garden, as far as the Eye can reach.'<sup>2</sup>

Inside the house, the taste of the owner was equally in

<sup>1</sup> Also built Liverpool Town Hall. Birmingham Cathedral, another product of this era, was the work of Thomas Archer (1719), a pupil of Wren.

<sup>2</sup> Defoe: *Tour through the Whole Island of Great Britain*.



#### GEORGIAN ARCHITECTURE

*Above*, the Radcliffe Library, Oxford, designed by James Gibbs.  
*Below*, Edgcote, Northamptonshire, a typical Georgian country house.

evidence. This was the period of the great furniture-makers, Chippendale, Hepplewhite, and Sheraton (1751-1806). Chippendale, who worked largely in mahogany (a wood imported from the Spanish West Indies), relied on the natural beauty of the wood; Sheraton inlaid the mahogany with satinwood, tulip wood, and even brass. The carving of the chairs, tables, and cabinets turned out by these great masters of their art was always of the most careful workmanship.

**Pottery** Another art which flourished in eighteenth-century England was that of pottery making. The potteries at Derby, Worcester, and Chelsea were all founded about this time, while in Staffordshire Josiah Wedgwood, greatest of all English potters, set up his famous foundry. His most typical pottery was decorated with designs in white, standing out against a plain background, usually blue.

Wedgwood  
(1730-95)

**Painting** Like the English Renaissance in architecture, the Classical school of English painting was much later than its counterpart on the Continent. The most famous portraits in Stuart times were painted by Dutchmen—Vandyke and Sir Peter Lely. But in the eighteenth century a school of native English painters arose, of whom Hogarth was the forerunner. Hogarth painted, or rather caricatured, the life of the common people whom he saw around him; in his 'Gin Lane' he tells a sordid though true story. His pictures often formed a series, intended to point a moral, as in 'Rake's Progress' and 'Marriage à la Mode'. After Hogarth came the portrait painters—Reynolds, Gainsborough, and Romney. The Royal Academy was founded (1768) in this the first considerable period of English painting;

Hogarth  
(1697-1764)

**Reynolds** Sir Joshua Reynolds was its first President. Gainsborough, besides being a portrait painter, was also in the first rank of landscape painters.

**Music** England, which in Elizabeth's day had been the foremost country in Europe for musicians, sadly declined in this respect in the following two centuries. No English composer arose after Purcell (died 1695)—none to compare with the great German

**Handel** masters, Bach, Beethoven, and Handel. But England at least adopted Handel, who made this country his home for nearly half a century. He came to England in 1710, and helped to introduce the Italian opera into London. After this, he turned





'MARRIAGE À LA MODE'

The second scene of Hogarth's famous series of pictures. The husband is ruining himself by gambling. His steward walks away in despair, an account book under his arm and a file of unpaid bills in his hand. The picture illustrates well the interior of a rich man's house in the eighteenth century.

to oratorios, and here he won immediate popularity and enduring fame. Handel's *Messiah* (first performed in Dublin 1742) is probably still the best-known choral work in the British Isles. It was in this period that John Gay wrote the lyrics for *The Beggar's Opera* (1728), one of the most charming and amusing musical comedies ever produced.<sup>1</sup>

The English stage underwent considerable changes in the eighteenth century. In the first place, it was now patronized by polite society and no longer regarded, as in Puritan times, as fit only for the amusement of vulgar and immoral persons. The artificial comedies of Goldsmith and Sheridan filled the London theatres; but far more important than this was the revival of Shakespeare. In the preceding century it had been the fashion to rewrite Shakespeare's plays and present them under other names; thus, the *Merchant of Venice* became the *Jew of Venice*, and the *Merry Wives* was rewritten as the *Comical Gallant*. Fortunately, there was now a reaction against this barbarous custom; in 1740 *As You Like It* was produced in London for the first time for forty years; next year the *Merchant of Venice* was performed in its original form for the first time for a century. The Shakespearian revival gave an opportunity to one of the greatest actors who have ever lived—David Garrick. He raised the profession of actor to a height never before attained in this country; he was justly regarded as one of the first men in England. It was he who instituted the Shakespearian Festival at Stratford-on-Avon (1769). Later in the century came Sarah Siddons, a beautiful and accomplished actress, whose most famous part was Lady Macbeth.

We have now briefly surveyed the arts and amusements of the upper classes of Hanoverian England—in some respects one of the most highly cultivated societies that have ever existed. The century that produced (besides the Pitts, Clive, and Wolfe) Reynolds and Gainsborough, Gay and Garrick, Chippendale and Wedgwood, Goldsmith and Gibbon, need fear few rivals. But this polite society had its vices. Gambling was a universal passion; thousands of pounds changed hands every night, and estates were thrown away at the card table. And heavy drinking was unfortunately common, among both rich and poor.

<sup>1</sup> It has been revived, with enormous success, in our own times.

To see the eighteenth century at its most typical, we must go to Bath, and imagine the town under the long reign of Beau Bath Nash, king of Fashion, who ruled supreme in the Pump Room and the Assembly Rooms. There a rigid etiquette governed the entire proceedings; there fortunes were won and lost, heiresses wooed, marriages made and unmade. The tune of the stately gavotte fills the ball-room; the white-wigged dancers move sedately to their places; the candles shine on the lovely dresses, the gay silks and satins of men and women. It is all very beautiful, very dignified and very artificial. Nothing was ever allowed to disturb the tranquillity of this world of wigs and powdered faces, of dancing and music and good wine—certainly not the troubles of the poor people of England, or the voice of John Wesley.

### 3. *The Methodist Revival*

The history of the Methodist Revival, in the reigns of George II and George III, reveals a startling contrast with the picture of England outlined in the preceding pages. When John Wesley visited the west of England, he did not go, like most well-to-do persons, to the Pump Rooms at Bath; he went to preach to the colliers of Kingswood, near Bristol, and to the tinners of the Cornish mines.

John Wesley (1703-91) was the second surviving son of the Reverend Samuel Wesley, Vicar of Epworth in Lincolnshire. <sup>John Wesley (1703-91)</sup> He was educated at Charterhouse and at Oxford, where he was ordained, and became a Fellow of Lincoln College. While at Oxford, he began the habit of early rising, which he kept up till extreme old age; Wesley's day began at four in the morning. <sup>Wesley at Oxford</sup> He and his brother Charles, who was at Oxford with him, were regular attendants at a certain religious society in the University. It was this society which received the college nickname of Methodist—a name which Wesley afterwards adopted for his own societies. In 1735 John Wesley accepted General Oglethorpe's invitation to lead a mission to his newly founded colony of Georgia. The visit was not a success, for Wesley quarrelled with many of the colonists and returned to England a disappointed man.

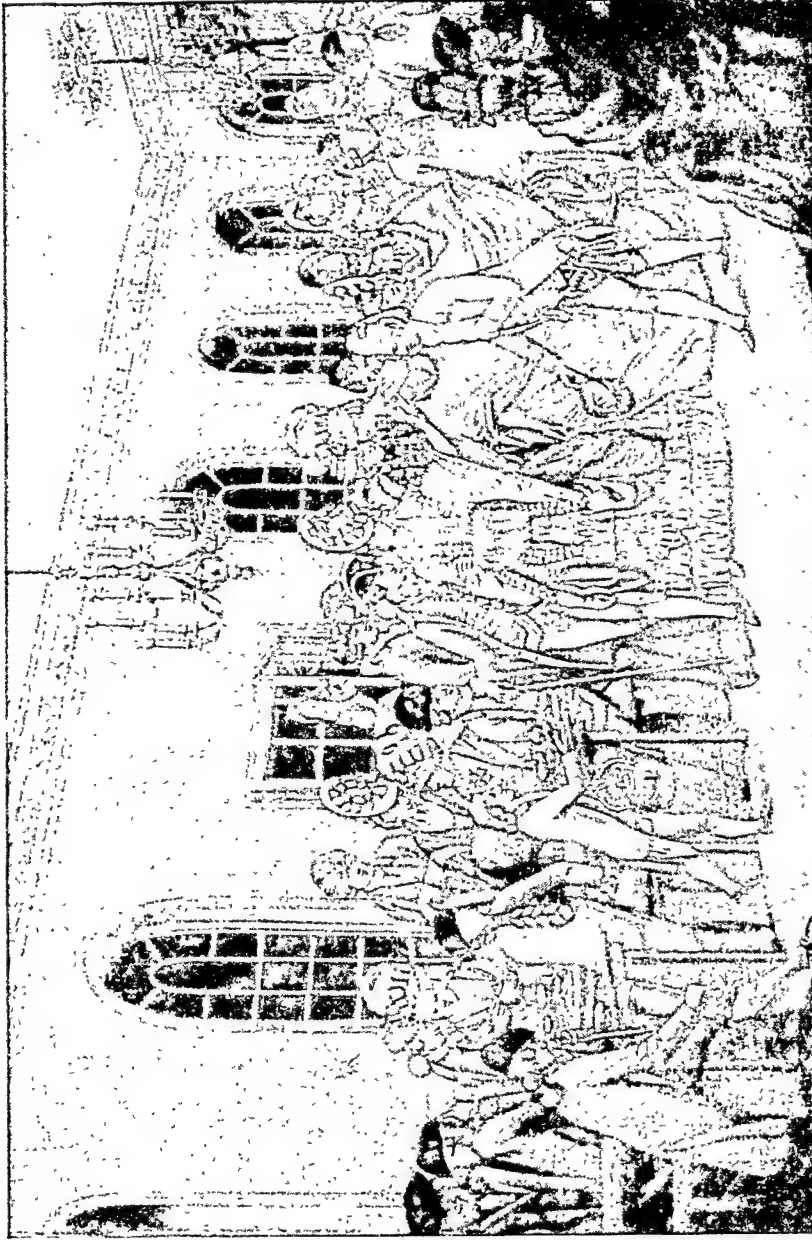
On his arrival in England (1737) he settled in London, where

he again came under the influence of the religious societies. It was now that he embraced the doctrine of 'Justification by Faith', and he believed that no man's life or actions were of any value unless he had a lively sense that all his sins had been forgiven by Christ. About this time the first Methodist societies were formed in London. The members used to hold long meetings, sometimes lasting all night, and performed orgies of religious devotion, scarcely surpassed in the days of the medieval monastic revivals.

Wesley's Conversion 1738 In conjunction with his brother Charles, and another remarkable man named George Whitefield, Wesley now began a missionary crusade in England and Wales, which was destined to transform the life of the nation. The founders of the movement not only preached all over the country themselves, but sent out field-preachers on a similar mission. Both Wesley and Whitefield preached in the open air—for the doors of the churches were closed to them—to enormous congregations, sometimes numbering 30,000 or 40,000 people. Wesley himself always remained a member of the Church of England; but, by the end of his life, his movement had assumed such large proportions, and was conducted on lines so dissimilar from the Established Church, that a separation was inevitable.

Origin of the Methodist Movement Two things contributed largely to the success of both Wesley and Whitefield: their extraordinary energy, and their remarkable powers as preachers. In the latter respect, George Whitefield surpassed Wesley; he was perhaps the most astonishing preacher who had been heard in Europe since the days of the first Friars. The effect of his sermons was amazing; he often caused a large proportion of his congregation to burst out weeping; some even fell to the ground in an agony of remorse. He himself rarely preached without being affected by tears. To these semi-hypnotic powers he added all the arts of a great actor. On one occasion, he likened the state of an unconverted sinner to that of an old blind man, tottering towards the edge of a precipice. So realistic was the description, that when the preacher came to the point where the old man falls over the edge of the cliff, Lord Chesterfield, who was listening, called out in alarm, 'Good God! he is gone!'<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> On another occasion, he was preaching to some sailors and used the



EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY ENGLAND

The world of pleasure. Drinking tea at Bagnigge Wells, a celebrated London tea-garden (about 1770).

Though Wesley was not Whitefield's equal as a preacher, yet his sermons were attended by thousands of persons a year, and were often accompanied by the same exhibitions of religious fervour as those of Whitefield. In the course of his missionary journeys Wesley travelled thousands of miles a year on horseback, and kept up this remarkable record for nearly half a century, till he was well over eighty. His main centres were London and Bristol. He made one long journey to the west of England nearly every year, and at least one to the north; two of his chief centres were Newcastle-on-Tyne and St. Ives in Cornwall. Besides these long journeys, lasting several months, he made several shorter ones—e.g. from London to Bristol and back—in the course of every year.<sup>1</sup>

Wesley's Journeys

Attitude of the Clergy

Their dislike of Enthusiasm

The reception given to the early Methodists by the clergy of the Established Church was an extremely hostile one. They were outraged that any man, particularly any clergyman, should presume to employ the method of field-preaching and attract the poor and ignorant to hear sermons preached in the style of St. Francis or Peter the Hermit. The English clergy were, on the whole, a quiet body of men, fond of their libraries and their gardens; but they confined their preaching activities to one weekly sermon. Worthy men though they were in many ways, the clergy were devoid of religious zeal of any kind, and they hated nothing so much as the 'enthusiasm' (i.e. fanaticism) of the Methodists. Wesley's mission was, like that of the first Disciples, to preach the Gospel of Christ to every creature. He found, over large districts of England and Wales, that the people were neglected by those whose duty it was to care for them. He found the people in the image of a ship lost in a storm. 'How the waves arise and dash against the ship! Our masts are gone! The ship is on her beam-ends! What next?' 'The long boat, take to the long boat!' cried out his excited audience.

<sup>1</sup> Two consecutive years may be taken as examples: 1744: (Jan.) London, Bristol. (Mar.–Apr.) Cornwall, Somerset, S. Wales. (May–June) Bristol, Staffs., Epworth, Yorkshire, Newcastle, Durham, Lancs., Cheshire, London. (July) Bristol. (Aug.) Oxford, Bristol, London. (Nov.) Bath, Bristol. 1745: (Jan.) Bristol. (Feb.–Apr.) Notts., Durham, Newcastle, Yorks, Derbyshire, Wednesbury, Oxford, London. (June–Aug.) Bristol, Cornwall, S. Wales. (Sept.–Nov.) Newcastle, Sheffield, Leeds, Epworth, Newcastle, Yorks, Cheshire, Birmingham, London. (See Wesley's *Journal*.)

was to instruct them. This accounts for the rage of the clergy at his success; he preached to the mob, and in revenge the clergy let loose hostile mobs upon him.

There is no doubt that the early persecutions which the Methodists endured were the result of the stirring up of the mob by hostile clergy and gentry. The two Wesleys and their followers had to face the most violent persecution during the first few years of their ministry. At Wednesbury and Darlaston, in Staffordshire, terrible scenes were witnessed. At Darlaston the mob broke into a Methodist's house and carried away all his goods; 'not satisfied with this, they sought for him and his wife, swearing they would knock their brains out. Their little children meanwhile wandered up and down, no one daring to relieve or take them in, lest they should hazard their own lives.' At Birmingham the houses of all the Methodists were attacked. 'They first broke all their windows, suffering neither glass, lead nor frames to remain therein. Then they made their way in; and all the tables, chairs, chests of drawers . . . they dashed in pieces . . . What they could not well break, as feather beds, they cut in pieces, and strewed about the room.' At St. Ives, in Cornwall, Charles Wesley had just begun to preach, when a mob broke into the meeting-house. They broke up everything, windows, shutters, benches, poor-box—all but the stone walls. At Towednack, near by, 'they assaulted us (says Charles Wesley) with sticks and stones and endeavoured to pull me down. I bade them strike me and spare the people. Many lifted up their hands and weapons, but were not permitted to touch me. My time is not yet come.'

Mob  
Violence

Charles  
Wesley

The courage with which the Wesleys faced these ordeals, however, eventually won them the respect of their enemies. And when it was established that the Methodists were neither political agitators, nor Papists, nor agents of the Pretender (the worst riots were in 1745), they were suffered to go in peace. After 1745 the persecution died down, and the new movement grew in strength from year to year.

Courage of  
the Wesleys

It is time to consider the condition of English society which the work of the Wesleys revealed. It is not too much to say that large sections of the people were living in conditions of such hardship, such danger and discomfort, and even of such

Condition  
of the Poor



absolute bestiality as cannot now be easily conceived. The Cornish tanners, for example, among whom Wesley preached for fifty years, worked underground, 'with hardly any room to turn their bodies, wet to the skin . . . by the glimmering of a small candle, whose scattered rays will barely penetrate the thick darkness of the place'.<sup>1</sup> A doctor who worked among these miners saw his patient conveyed to a hut 'full of naked children . . . destitute of all conveniences, and almost of all necessities. The whole, indeed, is a scene of such complicated wretchedness and distress as words have no power to describe.'<sup>2</sup>

The moral condition of such people was as deplorable as their physical state. Drunkenness was common in every village. Brutal sports, such as cock-fighting and bear-baiting, were usual, and 'games' of football, played in the village streets, were bloody encounters between half-savage men, who kicked and hacked at one another like wild beasts. Boxing matches between women attracted large crowds. This, too, was the heyday of smuggling, and of the even more pernicious practice of 'wrecking', which was especially prevalent on our western shores. Poor sailors wrecked on the English coast, and seeking help, found 'the Rocks themselves not more merciless than the People who range about them for Prey'. The wreckers used to murder the sailors, break up the ships, and carry away what goods they could.

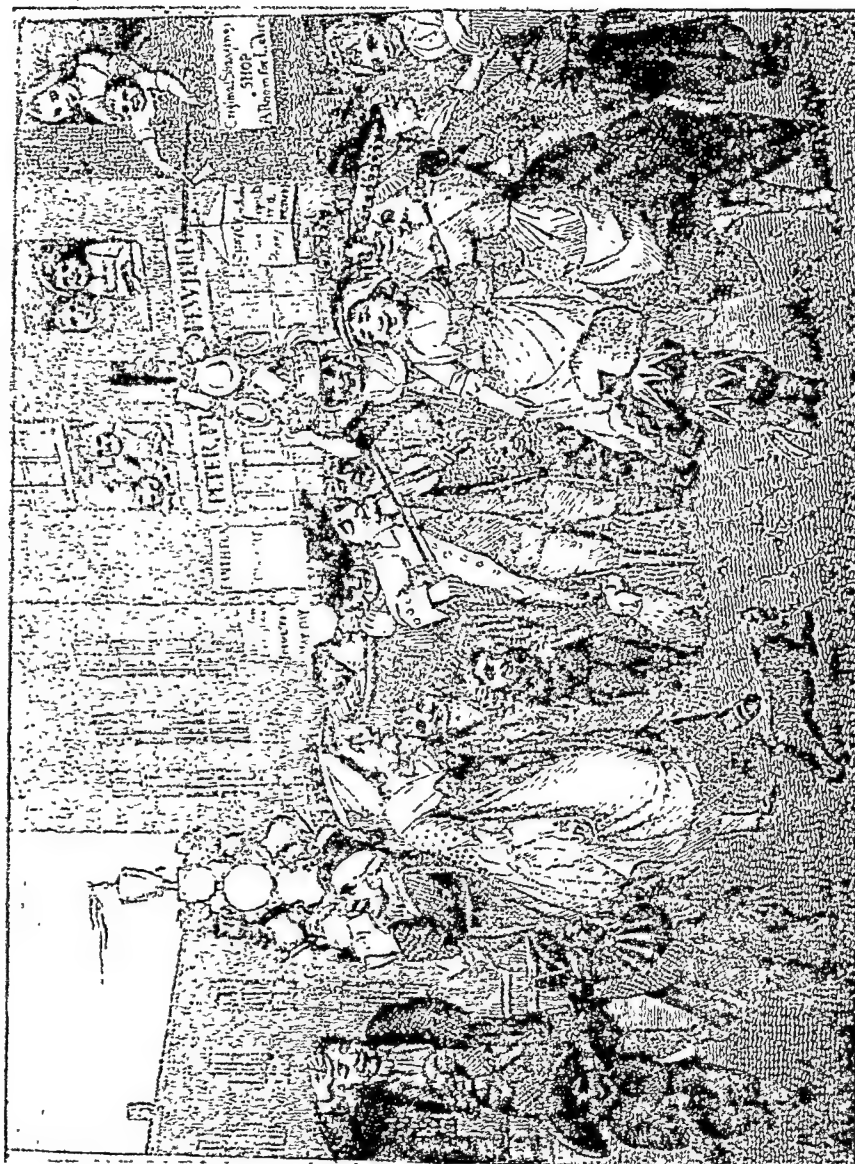
Civilizing  
influence of  
Methodism

Turning to the results of the Methodist movement, we may take first the benefits it conferred on England. First and foremost, Wesley and his preachers brought the mass of the people, formerly abandoned by polite society to their own barbarous habits, into contact with a more Christian and civilized life. Wesley forbade his followers to engage in the drunken or fighting orgies then common among the poorer classes; and the leaven which the Methodists thus introduced acted in time upon the whole community. 'These indefatigable men', wrote a Church of England clergyman about the Methodists, 'have perseveringly taught, gradually reclaimed, and at length completely reformed, a large body of men, who, without their

<sup>1</sup> Clarke, *Tour through South England*, 1791.

<sup>2</sup> Pryce, *Mineralogia Cornubiensis*, 1778.





EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY ENGLAND

Low life. A street scene on May Day in London (about 1780).

exertions, would still have been immersed in the deepest spiritual darkness, and the grossest moral turpitude.<sup>1</sup>

The moral reformation which Wesley effected in England during his lifetime did not cease at his death. The Evangelical Movement in the Church of England, which was a reaction against eighteenth-century indifference and a return to Puritanism, was a direct outcome of the Methodist movement. Many followers of John Wesley (like Wesley himself) could not bear to break with the Established Church, and remained within it. One of the best results, both of Methodism and of Evangelicalism, was the growth of a more humane spirit in English life, which led in time to the abolition of the Slave Trade, and to the ending of the more barbarous forms of 'amusement' in this country.

Defects of  
Methodism

There is, however, another side to the picture. Wesley's power was founded largely on an appeal to the emotion of fear. He was himself an extremely superstitious man, and he believed—and he impressed his belief on his hearers—that dreadful consequences, both in this world and the next, would follow a disregard of his message. Besides this, there was something harsh and uncompromising about John Wesley, as can be seen from his instructions to the school which he founded at Kingswood, Bristol. 'We have no play-day (he says), the school being taught every day in the year but Sunday, neither do we allow any time for play on any day; he that plays when he is a child will play when he is a man.' Again, Wesley set his face, not only against drunkenness and street-fighting, but against the most innocent amusements and recreations. He was thus largely responsible for the transformation of the Merry—too merry—England of the eighteenth century which he knew into the joyless England of the Victorian Sunday.

Wesley's  
School

<sup>1</sup> Warner's *Tour*, 1800.

## XXX

### THE CHANGE TO INDUSTRIAL ENGLAND

#### 1. *The Land and the Enclosures*

ENGLAND in 1700 was still chiefly a land of villages; there were no big towns except London, and agriculture was the occupation of the vast majority of the people. A large proportion of the arable land in England was still farmed on the old open-field system, which had endured from Saxon or earlier times. In some counties, particularly in the south-east (Kent, Surrey, Sussex, and Essex), large enclosures of land had taken place in Tudor times, and much of the land was there cut up into farms in the modern manner. But, except in these instances, England presented what would be to us an unfamiliar picture: large open fields, without hedges or fences, surrounding each village. These open fields were divided among the villagers as they had been from time immemorial; the 'custom' of the village had decided the size and position of the 'strips' to which each man was entitled.

Farming in  
1700

The Open-  
Field-  
System

Next in importance to agriculture came spinning and cloth-making, and that, too, was carried on in the country, where the people made the home-spun woollen cloth in their own cottages. Defoe, writing in 1725, thus describes the wool industry under this system, as he saw it in Yorkshire:

Industry in  
1700

'Though we met few people without doors, yet within we saw the houses full of lusty fellows, some at the dye-vat, some at the loom, others dressing the cloths; the women and children carding or spinning; all employed from the youngest to the oldest; scarce anything above four years old, but its hands were sufficient for its own support. Not a beggar to be seen nor an idle person, except here and there in an almshouse built for those that are ancient, and past working.'<sup>1</sup>

Such, in brief, was rural England of 200 years ago. Two tremendous changes, both of which took place during the second half of the eighteenth century, altered this old England

Two great  
changes

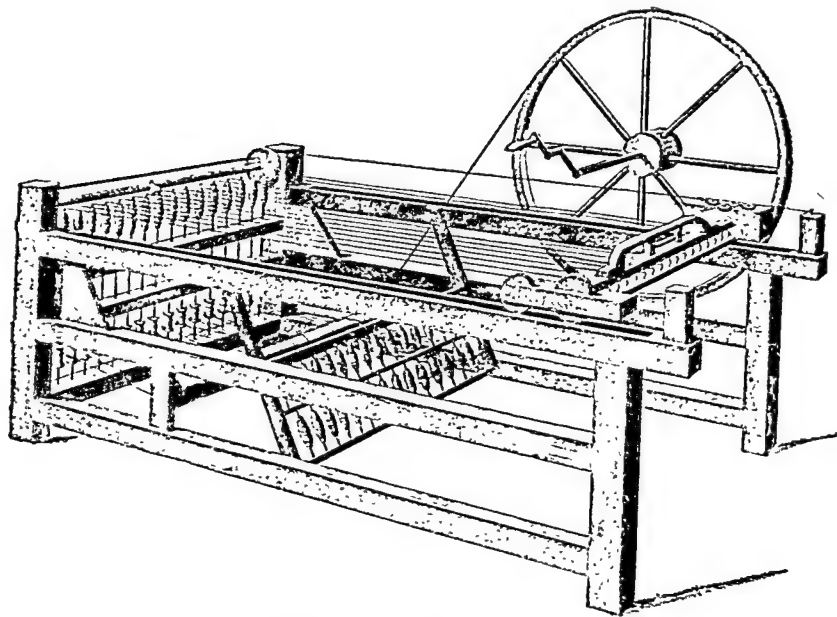
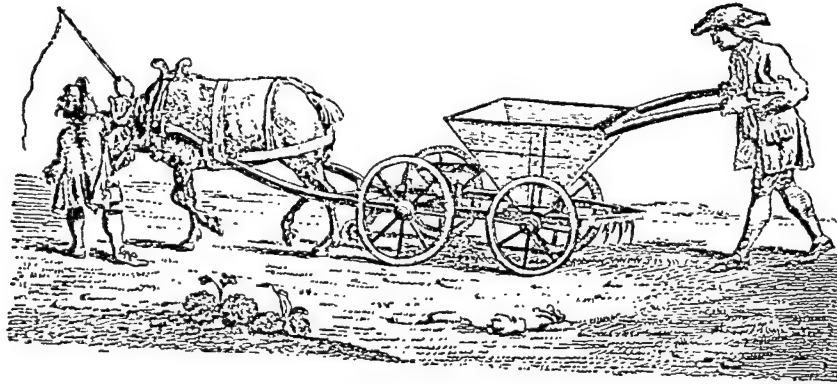
<sup>1</sup> Defoe, *Tour of Great Britain*.

beyond all recognition. These two changes were the enclosure of the common-fields and the coming of power-driven machinery. The former process destroyed the age-long system of strip-farming; the latter gradually destroyed the 'domestic' or household system, as applied to the cloth industry, as well as minor village industries, and substituted for these the factory system which still dominates British industry.

The Enclosures of the eighteenth century were accompanied by a revolution in the methods of farming as they had been practised for thousands of years. Pioneers of scientific farming saw that the old methods were wasteful and inefficient and set about devising improvements. Among the pioneers was Jethro Tull, who invented a machine—ominous word!—for sowing seed, which took the place of the human sower, scattering seed from a basket. Tull's machine was called a drill, and he described it in these words: 'It makes the channels, sows the seeds into them, and covers them at the same time, with great exactness and precision.' Another pioneer was Lord Townshend, who retired from politics in 1730,<sup>1</sup> and for the next thirty years devoted himself to farming on his Norfolk estate. 'Turnip' Townshend, as he was called, adopted a new rotation of crops, still known as the Norfolk or four-course system. Under the old system, the farmer had to allow one-third of his land to lie fallow each year, since the soil would not bear corn crops more than two years running. Townshend proved that, by planting root crops (turnips and mangolds) and clover, *all* the land could always be kept under cultivation; and further that the planting of the turnips and clover had beneficial effects on the soil. Townshend's rotation of crops was—turnips; barley or oats; clover; wheat. This system not only had the effect of improving the land but provided winter food for cattle, which meant fresh meat throughout the winter. Another Norfolk man who did much to introduce (from about 1778) the new methods of farming was Squire Coke of Holkham.

Next came vast improvements in the breeding of sheep and cattle. One of the first men to apply himself to this subject was Robert Bakewell (1725–95) of Dishley in Leicestershire, whose

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 585. Townshend, like other agricultural improvers, got many of his ideas from the Continent, especially Holland.



#### THE COMING OF MACHINERY

*Above, a four-wheel drill-plough with seed and manure hoppers (about 1745). Below, Hargreaves's spinning jenny (see p. 664).*

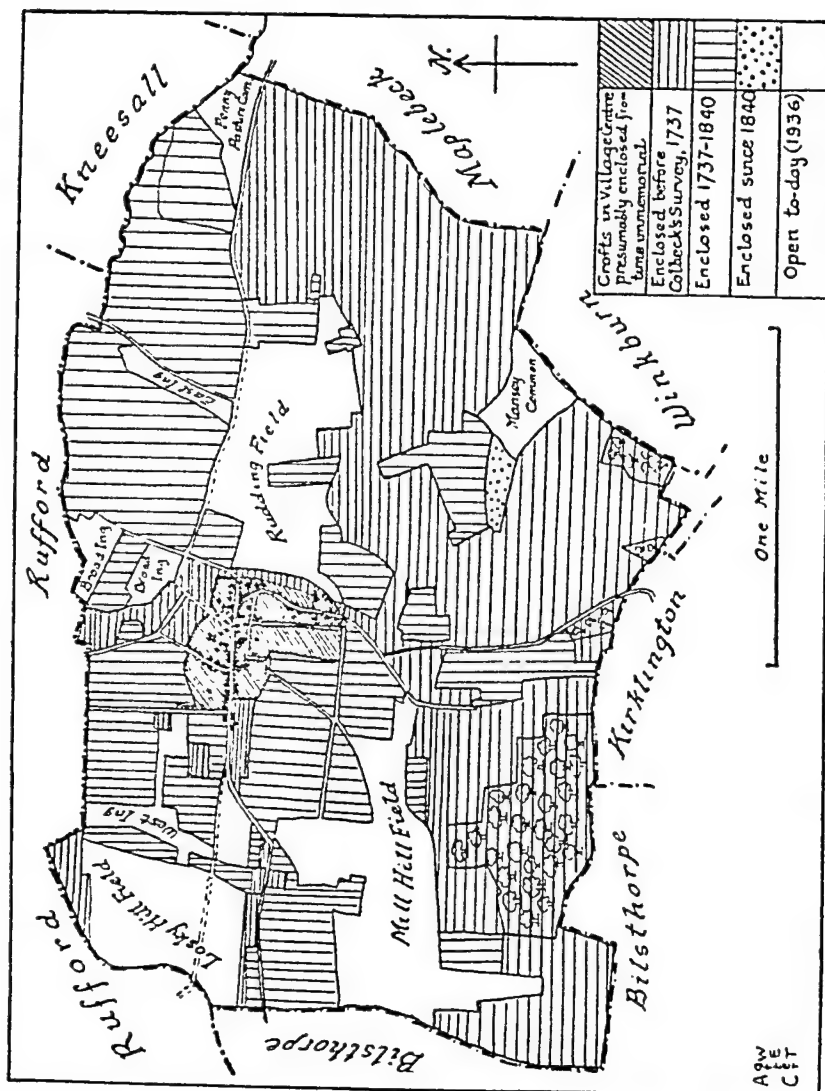
first experiments were made with the Longhorn breed of cattle. Bakewell also turned his attention to sheep, and the Leicestershire sheep which he bred were very fine animals. He specialized in producing large, fat sheep, paying less attention to the quality of the wool; and it is said that the new breed of sheep were two or even three times as heavy as the old. Charles Colling, of Ketton, near Darlington, followed Bakewell's methods, and succeeded in producing the Shorthorn breed of cattle, which are now famous all over the world.

The need for Enclosure It was easy to see that, as soon as the new methods of farming became widely known, the old system of English agriculture would collapse. Population was increasing rapidly, and yet the land was producing only a fraction of what it might. To bring in the new methods, it was necessary to do away with the strip system, for small farmers, owning only a few acres each, were conservative and disinclined to try any novelty. Besides, the strip system was obviously not only antiquated but wasteful. So it came about that, during the second half of the eighteenth century, thousands of acres of strips were 'enclosed' to make compact fields and farms. Enclosures were sometimes brought about by mutual consent, but often it was necessary to promote a special Act of Parliament in order to overcome the obstinacy—as it seemed to the promoters—of the villagers.

Enclosure Acts Between 1702 and 1750, 112 such Acts were passed; between 1750 and 1810, 2,920. In 1801 came the General Enclosure Act, which rendered easier the process of enclosure. During the whole century, about  $2\frac{3}{4}$  million acres of common-fields, and  $1\frac{1}{2}$  million acres of waste, were thus enclosed by Act of Parliament; these figures, of course, take no account of land otherwise enclosed.

Enclosures were of two kinds: (a) enclosure of the common or waste, which was reclaimed for the plough, and (b) enclosure of the open (the fenceless) fields, by redistributing the land, i.e. splitting it up into modern farms, divided by hedges. It was this latter system which caused the greatest amount of distress.

Distress caused by Enclosure When the land came to be re-divided, many poor persons were unable to show a legal right to their share of it, which had usually been determined by village custom. And even if they could show a legal right, the poor were often unable to pay the



THE PROGRESS OF ENCLOSURE IN ENGLAND  
The parish of Eaking, Nottinghamshire.

cost of hedging, and so had to sell their share; in either case they lost their land. They also lost the right to graze animals on the waste and to collect fuel. And so the old village system, under which every householder had his little bit of land, disappeared from England. Its place was taken by a new system of farming, admittedly less wasteful and producing far better results, but involving, nevertheless, considerable hardships.

Arthur Young, who spent most of his life urging improvements in farming and advocating Enclosure, was yet obliged to own in his later years that much suffering had been caused. In 1801 Young wrote: 'By nineteen out of twenty Enclosure Acts, the poor are injured, and most grossly.'

The loss of their land, by causing the villagers great distress, drove many of them into the towns,<sup>1</sup> to seek their fortune in the new industries which steam-power was bringing into the world. There is no greater change in England's history than this: that the mass of the population was driven from the countryside, so that England, which in 1750 had been largely rural, was by 1850 largely urban. It was, in many respects, a change for the worse, as some of the victims themselves foresaw. Here is part of a petition, addressed to Parliament in 1797, by the men of Raunds in Northamptonshire:

Petition  
against  
Enclosure

'A ruinous effect of this enclosure will be the almost total depopulation of their town, now filled with bold and hardy husbandmen, from among whom, and the inhabitants of other open parishes, the nation has hitherto derived its greatest strength and glory, in the supply of its fleets and armies; and driving them, from necessity and want of employ, in vast crowds, into manufacturing towns, where the very nature of their employment, over the loom or the forge, soon may waste their strength, and consequently debilitate their posterity, and by imperceptible degrees obliterate that great principle of obedience to the Laws of God and their country, which forms the character of the simple and artless villagers, more equally distributed through the open counties, and on which so much depends the good order and government of the State.'

<sup>1</sup> It should be remembered that the village industries were declining at the same time as the Enclosures were taking place, owing to the rise of the new industries, to be described in the next section. This, again, drove the poor into the towns.



This petition was not drawn up by one of the 'simple and artless villagers!' But it was drawn up by some one who foresaw only too truly the wretched fate which awaited them and their children in the new industrial towns. Oliver Goldsmith, in his *Deserted Village*, laments the passing of the old English village, where the country parson was 'passing rich with forty pounds a year', and where 'every rood of ground maintained its man'.

Ill fares the land, to hast'ning ills a prey,  
Where wealth accumulates and men decay;  
Princes and lords may flourish, or may fade—  
A breath can make them, as a breath has made—  
But a bold peasantry, their country's pride,  
When once destroy'd can never be supplied.

## 2. *The Coming of Machines*

In the eighteenth century a change developed in the method and scale of industry more far-reaching in its effects than all the wars and politics of the period, for the coming of machinery meant that an entirely new phase was opening in the history of human occupations.

The England over which 'Farmer George' began to reign in 1760 was still, as we have seen, chiefly a land of farmers; and such small industries as were carried on were also country pursuits. But, by the time George III died, this was irrevocably changed; the nation of farmers and village craftsmen had become mainly a nation of mechanics and factory 'hands'. For it was in Britain that the new machines had their first home; it was a few Britons who invented or applied them. The name 'Industrial Revolution' is usually given to this stupendous change; but it should be remembered that this change in industry was gradual, that it cannot be dated from any particular year, and that in our own day it has been spreading from Britain to all the countries of the world. The age of steam has been followed by the age of petrol and electricity; and we cannot tell what new scientific devices will, in as short a space of time, transform the lives of our descendants.

In this section we shall consider only the first phase of this

Industrial 'Revolution'.<sup>1</sup> The first inventions were applied to the old woollen industry, and to the new manufacture of cotton, which sprang up in south Lancashire. It was in 1733 that John Kay, of Bury, Lancashire, invented his 'flying shuttle', a mechanical device which greatly increased the speed at which the weavers of cloth could work. Kay's invention led to the gradual disappearance of the old hand-loom, and the adoption of the power-loom. The first power-looms were worked by water; hundreds of them were set up in Lancashire on the slopes of the Pennines, by the banks of moorland streams. Here, in deserted spots, their ruins can still be seen—a reminder of the brief reign of water-power, before the invention of steam-engines caused the cotton industry to move to the Lancashire coalfield.

The new power-looms wove the cloth so fast that the spinners (still working on the old-fashioned spindle) could not keep pace with the demand for more cotton. Then, though not till thirty years after Kay's invention, Hargreaves invented the multiple spinning 'jenny' (1764), which made it possible for one man to work at first eight, and later a hundred, spindles. The 'jenny' was soon improved by Richard Arkwright, who developed the 'spinning frame' (1771) worked by water-power, and a few years later by Crompton, whose 'mule' (1779) combined the merits of both Hargreaves' and Arkwright's machines.

It was not till 1785—fifty years after Kay's first machine—that one of Watt's steam-engines (which we shall consider presently) was first used in a cotton mill. But in these fifty years Lancashire cotton trade had grown at an astonishing rate, and it was to grow still more in the future; Lancashire, for another 150 years, was destined to be the main supplier of machine-made cotton goods to the world.<sup>2</sup> A combination of circumstances made the prosperity of Lancashire. The damp climate suited the cotton-thread; Liverpool and the Mersey were convenient for importing raw cotton from America and exporting cotton goods to the whole world.<sup>3</sup> An old-established

<sup>1</sup> For later developments see Chapters XXV, XLI, and XLV.

<sup>2</sup> Lancashire imported 8,000 tons of raw cotton in 1760, 25,000 tons in 1800, and 300,000 tons in 1861.

<sup>3</sup> See Section 5.

woollen industry was the stem from which the cotton industry developed. Finally, the south Lancashire coal-field was ready for use when steam-power came to drive the wheels of industry. The new inventions were also applied to the woollen industry, which did not, however, grow at so rapid a rate as the cotton. Woollen stuffs were not suitable for export to the tropics, one of the main markets for cottons: the old-established woollen trade resisted change, whereas cotton was new and welcomed it; and sheep could not be produced so quickly or in such large quantities as cotton-plants.

There were also great developments in the coal and iron industries. The manufacture of iron had been carried on in England from early times. Iron is extracted from the iron-stone (or iron ore) by heating the latter until the metal is separated from it. The heating agent used for centuries in this process had been wood charcoal; hence the first English ironworks were in Sussex, in the great Forest of Weald.<sup>1</sup> But timber became scarce and production fell. Then came the discovery that it was possible to turn coal into coke, and use it instead of charcoal in the smelting process.

The first man to use coke in furnaces was Abraham Darby (the elder), at Coalbrookdale in Shropshire (1709). His son, of the same name, improved on his methods, and by the middle of the century coke was used in all the various heating processes by which iron is refined and made fit for use. The increase in the production of iron was startling; England in 1737 produced between 12,000 and 15,000 tons of iron; in 1806 over 250,000 tons. This revolution in the iron industry led to the development of the coal-fields—in which Britain was found to be singularly rich—in the Black Country, south Wales, south Yorkshire, south Lancashire, the Tyne, and the Clyde.

Steam-engines had for some time been used for pumping water out of coal-mines. It was in 1776 that John Wilkinson, iron-master, first used the steam-engine for 'blowing' in blast-furnaces; and soon steam-power entirely took the place of water-power in all the processes of the iron industry, and also in the cotton industry. In fact the steam-engine soon supplied

<sup>1</sup> Ironworks were also set up in other places, e.g. the Midlands and Yorkshire, in order to tap fresh supplies of timber.

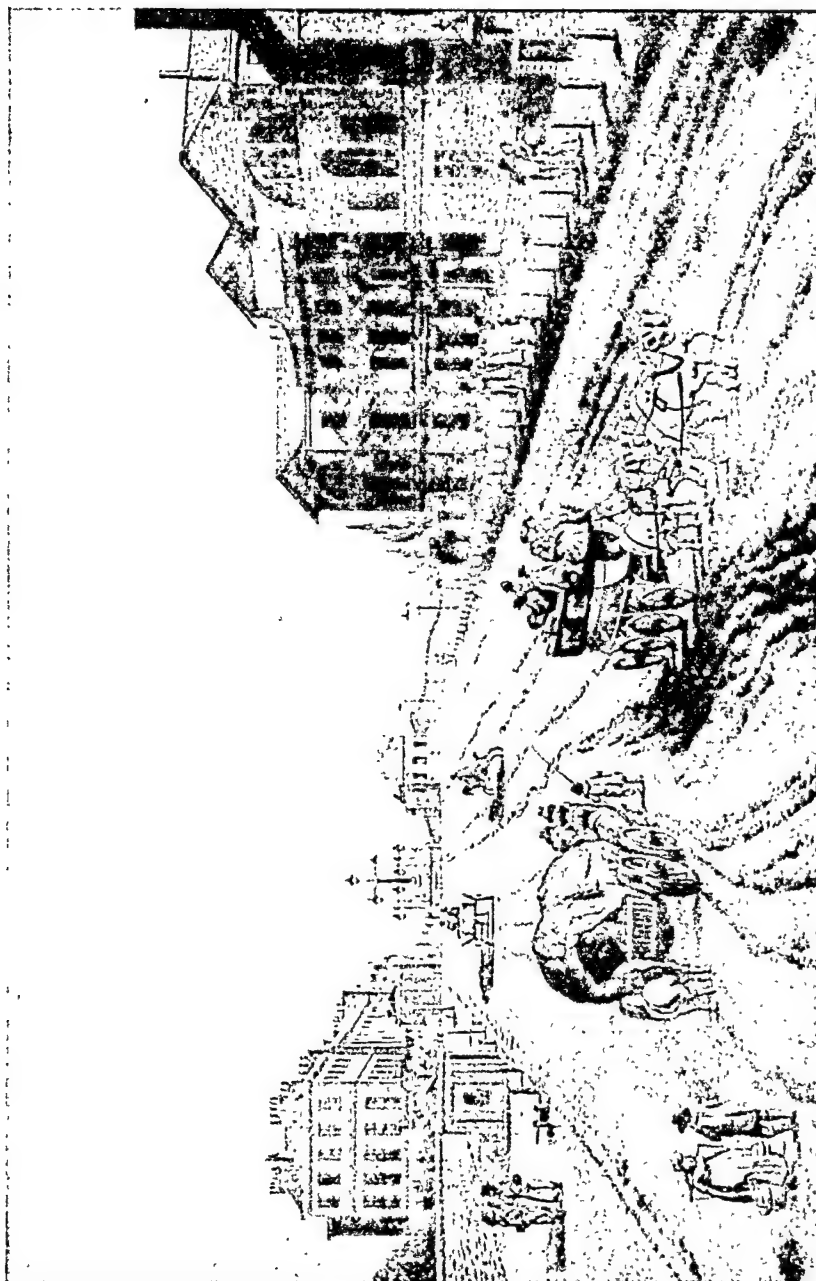
the motive power for all the industries which transformed England.

The inventor of a practical and economical steam-engine was James Watt, an instrument-maker of Glasgow. Watt was a cross-grained, melancholy man,<sup>1</sup> who suffered from headaches; his workmen, when he had any, suffered from his bad temper. There had been steam-engines before Watt's, but they were not very effective, because no one had thought of making what is called the 'separate condenser'. The secret of the steam-engine is said to have occurred to Watt in 1765; he patented his invention four years later. But he had to wait some years longer, owing to lack of money, before he could make any use of his discovery. Then he had the luck to be taken into partnership (1775) by an enterprising business man, Matthew Boulton, whose works were at Soho, near Birmingham. The partnership of Boulton and Watt was successful because Watt's inventive powers were sound, and his deficiencies as a business man—which were considerable—were more than made up by the capable Boulton. From the day when 'Iron-mad' Wilkinson (1728-1808) tried one of Watt's engines in his blast-furnace at Bilston (Staffs.), and found it satisfactory, all went well. The original partners of the firm of Boulton and Watt continued in business for another quarter of a century, and made a large fortune. By 1800 the steam-engine was being used in coal-mines, in iron-furnaces, and in the textile industries.

### 3. Roads and Canals

The new age ushered in by the machines could not have flourished under the old conditions of transport, which had endured for generations in England. But the coming of machinery coincided with an improvement in the transport of goods; the production of coal, iron, and other heavy materials necessitated the making, first of canals (in the eighteenth century) and then of railways (in the nineteenth century). At

<sup>1</sup> 'If one man in the history of the world is to be taken as the author of modern civilization, it is this melancholy mechanic, in whose outlook on life the superstitious might perhaps discern a warning of its ambiguous blessings' (Hammond, *Rise of Modern Industries*).



THE IMPROVEMENT OF ROAD TRANSPORT

The Hyde Park Corner Turnpike in 1798. A waggon from the country, drawn by six horses, is on the left, and a coach-and-four on the right.

the same time as the canals were made, the roads were improved.

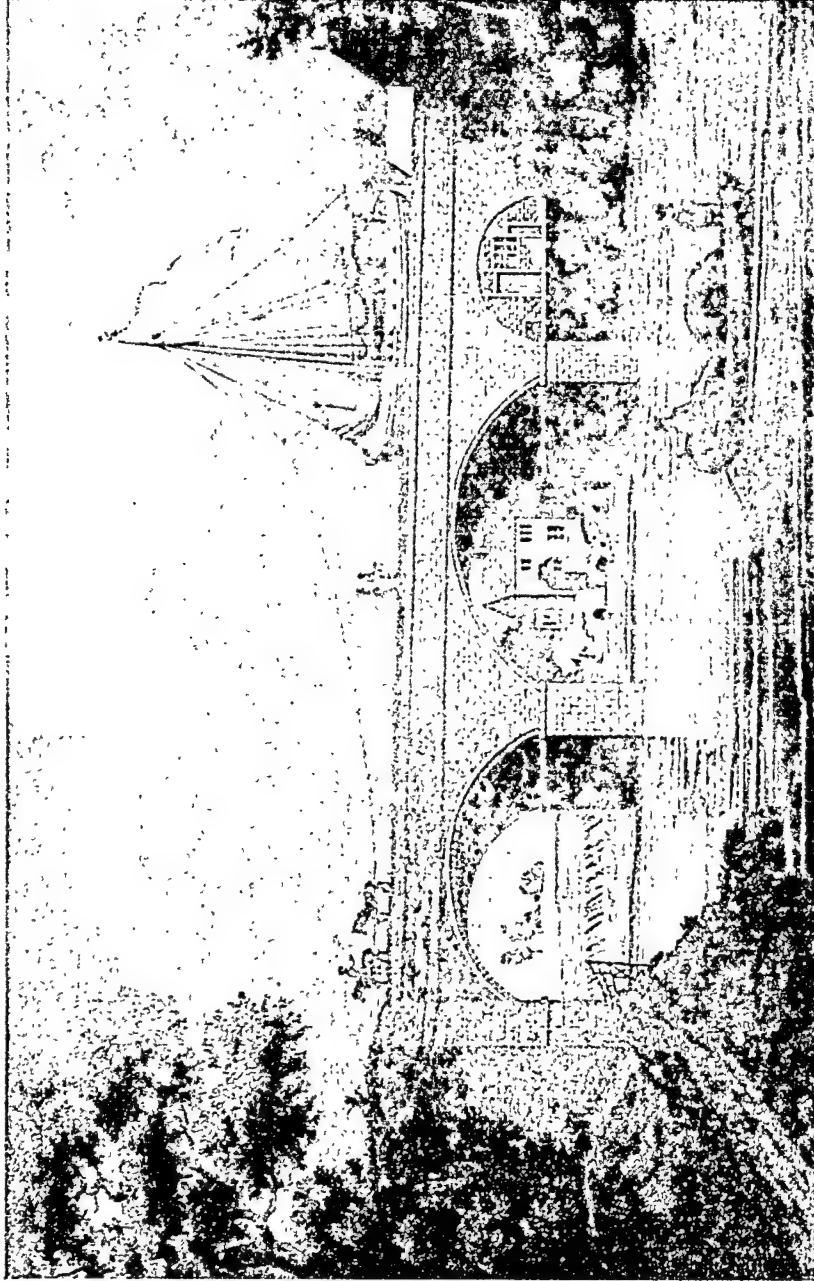
The great roads which the Romans built in this country were magnificent feats of early engineering; but fourteen centuries of neglect had considerably reduced their original excellence. During all that time no worthy successors of the Roman roads were built: pack-horses, using rough tracks, carried light goods and the mails; heavy traffic usually got stuck in the mud. Teams of pack-horses carried the wool down the Yorkshire dales to the Humber<sup>1</sup>; even coal was so carried from Merthyr to Cardiff, until the making of a road down the Taff Vale (1767). Many heavy goods were carried by sea; it is because Britain is an island that the badness of her roads was not earlier remedied. Coals had for centuries come from Newcastle to London by sea.

The unpleasant conditions of travel, which have been described in an earlier chapter,<sup>2</sup> remained with little alteration till the middle of the eighteenth century. A beginning was indeed made earlier, in Charles II's time, with the institution of Turnpike Trusts, by which local authorities were empowered to erect toll-gates, and repair the roads with the proceeds of the toll. But village activity did not go much beyond filling up an occasional pit in the highway; it was not till the eighteenth century that Turnpike Trusts were organized on a larger scale, and a real step forward in road-making was taken. Coaches were then able to travel much faster; the 'Flying Coach' (1754) advertised speed in the following terms: 'However incredible it may appear, this coach will actually (barring accidents) arrive in London in four days and a half after leaving Manchester.'

The eighteenth century produced three great road engineers —Metcalf, Telford, and Macadam. Metcalf (1717-1810), known as Blind Jack of Knaresborough, had lost his sight through small-pox at the age of six, yet he knew the wild moors of Yorkshire by heart. He designed many of the chief roads in Lancashire, Yorkshire, and Cheshire. Thomas Telford

<sup>1</sup> The wool was taken all over England in the same manner. One may often notice the name 'Wool-pack Inn.'

<sup>2</sup> Chapter XXIV (Age of Newton and Wren).



THE AGE OF CANAL-BUILDING

The Bridgewater Canal at Barton Bridge, where it is carried across the river Irwell.

(1757-1834), a Scottish shepherd's son, built the Holyhead Road, and he excited the wonder of his contemporaries by constructing the iron suspension-bridge over the Menai Straits (opened 1826), the longest (1,000 feet) suspension bridge in this country.

It was John Loudon Macadam (1756-1836) who invented an entirely new process of road-making (c. 1810). It consisted in using small stones, which could be easily crushed (more easily after the invention of the steam-roller) to form a hard yet fairly smooth surface;<sup>1</sup> 'no stone', Macadam said, 'should be larger than the road-mender could put in his mouth'. Macadam's discovery has been an immense boon to travellers, from the stage-coach users in 'good King George's golden days' to the modern motorist. It transformed travelling conditions; and in 1824 (the year before the first railway) the Manchester-London coach did the journey in twenty-four hours. The days of the stage-coach in all its glory were, however, not long, for by the next generation railways had come to divert the main traffic into another channel. The coaching inns had to wait for the motor-car before they saw a revival of their prosperity.

More closely connected with industry was the era of canal building, which had been preceded by a good deal of 'canalization' of rivers. English canals, constructed during the second half of the eighteenth century, were built chiefly for the transport of coal. The Duke of Bridgewater, who was a large colliery owner, employed James Brindley (1716-72), a brilliant engineer but an illiterate man, to build a canal between Worsley and Manchester (1761). Bridgewater encountered much opposition in Parliament; as Brindley wrote: 'The Toores mad had agane ye Duk.'<sup>2</sup> But, when the canal opened, the cost of carrying goods between the two towns fell from 12s. to 6s. a ton. Encouraged by Bridgewater's success, canal companies immediately sprang up all over England. The Grand Trunk Canal linked Manchester and Hull with Birmingham and Bristol. Telford, the road engineer, built a number of canals in England and Wales; in his native country he built the famous

<sup>1</sup> When tar-spraying was invented in the present century, the Macadam roads were given a new name—Tar-mac.

<sup>2</sup> 'The Tories made head against the Duke.'



Caledonian Canal. Workmen employed in canal-making were known as 'navigators', from which we get the familiar word 'navvy'.

The interval between the opening of the Bridgewater Canal in 1761 and the opening of the Stockton and Darlington Railway (the first railway) in 1825, was one of sixty-four years. During this period, which may be taken as the first phase of the Industrial Revolution, canals were the principal means of transport for coal, iron, and the products of the new industries. After that the canal, like its contemporary the stage-coach, was overshadowed by the latest application of Watt's invention—the steam locomotive.

The  
Canal Age

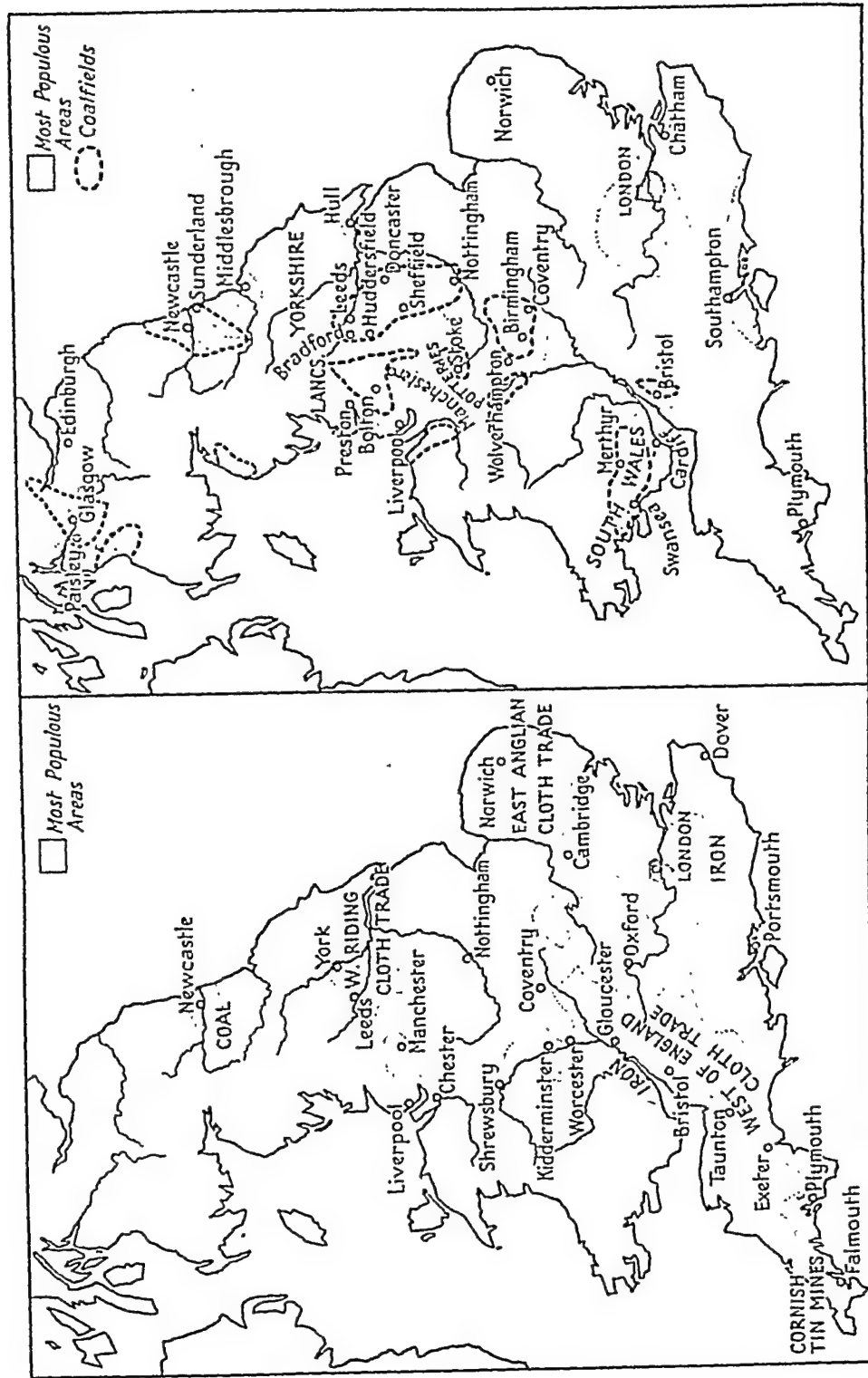
#### 4. *The New Towns*

The change from the old to the new England coincided with a remarkable increase in the population. The number of people living in England and Wales at the accession of George III (1760) was about 7 millions; that is to say, it had risen slowly from perhaps 1½ millions during the seven centuries since the Norman Conquest. In the sixty years of George III's reign, the population of England and Wales nearly doubled; it was 12 millions in 1821.<sup>1</sup> This increase was continued during the nineteenth century at an even greater rate; the population was more than trebled during the hundred years 1821–1921, being 40 millions in the latter year. All the reasons for these remarkable increases are not clear, but it seems probable that they were connected with the change from a rural to an urban society. It is possible that the new urban workers married earlier and had larger families than had been customary under the old conditions of rural life.

The  
Population  
of England  
and Wales

This new urban population grew up in the industrial districts, which were themselves the products of the new machines. East Anglia and the Cotswolds, earlier centres of the wool trade, lacked coal-fields, and soon became the pleasant old-world backwaters they still remain. Norwich, which for centuries had been the third largest town in England, after London and

<sup>1</sup> In 1801 the first Census was taken; the Census has been taken at ten-year intervals since then. Estimates of population before 1801 are, of course, not very accurate.



ENGLAND BEFORE THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION, 1730

MAP OF INDUSTRIAL BRITAIN, 1930

Bristol, had sunk to the tenth place by 1801; while such places as Birmingham, Glasgow, Manchester, Liverpool, Leeds, Bradford, and Sheffield grew to be huge, sprawling cities, far bigger than anything the old Britain had known (except London)—and far uglier.

The New  
Towns

A glance at the map (see opposite page) will show where the thickly populated industrial areas lay. With the exception of London, they were all the creation of the Industrial Revolution, during which time there were immigrations of people from the south to the midlands and north—which were for long the most important manufacturing areas in the world. This change took place during (roughly) the half century 1775–1825; and though some of the districts once so prosperous are now unfortunately derelict areas (e.g. south Wales and Tyneside), the general picture remains much the same to-day.

This new industrial Britain came into existence during that remarkable half-century in which Britain lost the thirteen American colonies and helped to defeat Napoleon. The statesmen who governed Britain during that time had small conception of the fact that a revolution in the habits of mankind was taking place before their eyes. Still less did they at first realize that it was their duty to regulate the change, or to mitigate its evils. The result was much avoidable suffering for their own generation and terrible problems for their successors. The problems which we, at the present day, have inherited from that period are, broadly speaking, two: the slums and the relations between Capital and Labour.

Attitude of  
Statesmen  
to the  
Industrial  
Revolution

Two  
Problems

The towns of the Industrial Revolution, it has been said, were 'barracks for cheap labour, not homes for citizens'. Their first radical defect was that they were planless; large cities were allowed to grow up haphazard and uncontrolled. Secondly, in the first and vital stage of the Industrial Revolution, there were no sanitation laws; consequently the jerry-builder (whose work is evil enough in these days when his activities are partially controlled) could work his will. Houses for the workers had to be built as quickly as possible. So built they were, sometimes back to back, sometimes without sanitation, lacking light, lacking air, often lacking decency, and always in long, dreary rows of brick and slate. The slum, it should be

The New  
Industrial  
Towns

Lack of  
Plan and  
Sanitation

noted, was no new thing; slums had existed since the Middle Ages. It was the vast scale of this jerry-building that was new and that defies description.

One result of housing vast new populations in this manner was that their descendants often grew up stunted, both in body and in mind. The larger the town, the worse the results, for big towns were impossible to escape from before the days of cheap transport. And so generations grew up divorced from Nature; a majority of the people of England had never seen England at all. For one of the loveliest countries in the world, they had been given a forest of factory chimneys, and an endless town of mean streets.

It is a curious and a saddening reflection that the making of this industrial England aroused very little protest. Macaulay is typical of his generation in praising the advance in Man's command over Nature; but he was blind to the fact that the chief sufferer in the process was his fellow man. 'Nowhere (he writes) are manufactures carried to such perfection (as in England). Nowhere does man exercise such a dominion over matter.' Again, Wilberforce, in the House of Commons (1806), described the industrial districts of Scotland and south Wales as places which 'Nature seemed to have doomed to perpetual sterility', but which were now 'covered by the fruits of human industry, and gladdened by the face of man'. It was left for William Blake (1757-1827), poet and seer, to speak of the 'dark Satanic mills' where industry was hived, and to call for the building of a worthier England—

I will not cease from mental fight  
Nor shall my sword sleep in my hand,  
Till we have built Jerusalem  
In England's green and pleasant land.

##### 5. *Laissez-faire*

The second great problem of the modern world—that of the relations between Capital and Labour—is also largely a legacy of the Industrial Revolution. To understand this, we must study the process by which British merchants captured the trade of the world; for it was these merchants who created the conditions of modern industry.



THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION

Industry encroaching on the country. 'An Iron Work, for casting of Cannon, on the banks of the Severn in 1788.'

The age of mechanical invention, and the age of steam power, both began at a moment remarkably well timed for the expansion of British trade. The fall of the old Mercantile Empire did not involve any loss of trade, even with America. The population of the United States (three millions in 1776) grew rapidly, and for another fifty years the Americans were an agricultural, not a manufacturing people. Trade with America grew apace; we imported American cotton, and exported to the States our manufactured goods. In 1782 America sent us 5,400 tons of raw cotton; by 1810 this figure had risen to 59,000 tons. It was the same with India, which came under our political control about the turn of the century; India was one of the best markets for Lancashire cotton goods. Britain captured the trade of the world, West as well as East. The goods with which she supplied far-off cities of India, the growing towns of America, the sugar-isles of the Caribbean Sea, and the nations of the Continent of Europe, were all made in Lancashire, Yorkshire, or the midland towns of England.

The merchants who made their fortune by this world trade profited by the lucky fact—lucky for them—that the Industrial Revolution began in Britain. Not only were the new machines invented in Britain, but the country was rich in supplies of coal and iron—the essential materials of the new industries. So it came about that Britain was at least half a century ahead of the rest of Europe in applying machinery to manufactures. The lead which she thus acquired she did not lose for a century—she did not begin seriously to feel foreign competition till the eighteen-seventies. Further, the wealth of British merchants and the skill of British workmen, during the first phase of the Industrial Revolution, enabled the country to carry on the long war against France (1793–1815). The weapons which beat Napoleon were made in Birmingham.

The men who made the 'business world' of modern industry claimed the right to manage their affairs in their own way. A phrase was coined by some French economists of the period to describe this attitude—*Laissez-faire*! 'Leave things alone'—'Let us alone'—was the cry of the business men. It meant that they were to be given a completely free hand, and that the State was to abandon its ancient right to regulate trade; the

State, in fact, was not to 'interfere in business'. Now, in the past business had always been, to some extent, regulated. The old Guild System of the Middle Ages had regulated trade down to the minutest detail; in Tudor and Stuart times there had been Acts of Parliament regulating the hours of labour and the rates of wages.<sup>1</sup> Again, the Navigation Acts had regulated the ships in which various goods might be carried to and from Britain.

Opposition  
to State  
Inter-  
ference

To sweep away all these regulations was the aim of the *Laissez-faire* school: it was accomplished during the first half of the nineteenth century. But long before that opinion had veered round to their side. The man who perhaps more than any one else was responsible for this was Adam Smith, who, like James Watt, came from Glasgow. His *Wealth of Nations*, published in 1776, heralded a new era in British commerce, just as the Declaration of Independence, in the same year, proclaimed the fall of the old Mercantile Empire. Adam Smith was the prophet of Free Trade. He held that all government interference is harmful to trade; let the merchants alone (*laissez-faire*), he argued, and they will make Britain a rich country. He made a convert of the new Prime Minister, William Pitt,<sup>2</sup> who reduced many trade restrictions, and prepared the way for the 'Free Trade' of the next century.

Adam  
Smith  
*The Wealth  
of Nations*

Free Trade

Besides desiring free trade with foreign nations, the masters of the new industries were anxious to have complete freedom in dealing with their own work-people. To this end they wished to abolish all the laws which had, from olden times, regulated industry. They succeeded in doing this before the end of the Napoleonic Wars. The Elizabethan Act authorizing magistrates to fix wages was repealed in 1813; the next year the section of the Elizabethan Statute of Artificers which enforced apprenticeship was also repealed. Even before this the masters claimed, and exercised in practice, freedom from State control. The State, they argued, must let masters and men alone to fix up between them a 'free bargain'. Statesmen agreed to let them alone; but they forgot that

Abolition of  
Regulation  
of Industry

<sup>1</sup> Especially the great Elizabethan *Statutes of Labourers*. See Chapter XVII.

<sup>2</sup> For Pitt's commercial measures, see next chapter.

the bargain between the masters and men was anything but free. Masters can afford to wait, but men must sell their labour in the available market or starve.

The results of these conditions of employment were twofold. First, the men did not always get a fair deal; secondly, a spirit of antagonism was created. This sometimes led to bitterness between the artisans and the employers. But it must be remembered that there had been hardships enough before (as well as during) these industrial changes. Both masters and men were trained in a hard school, and many of the new captains of industry were themselves ex-employees risen from the ranks.

The sufferings of the work-people during the first phase of the Industrial Revolution were undoubtedly great. The workers had of necessity to live near the factories, in the new 'towns' built to house them.<sup>1</sup> They were also compelled to suffer the iron discipline<sup>2</sup> of the factory itself. In a later chapter<sup>3</sup> we shall note some of the evils that were brought to light during the agitation for factory reform. It is sufficient to note here that men, women, and small children were made to work for 12, 14, or even 16 hours a day, tending dangerous machines, breathing foul air, ill paid, under-nourished, lacking the ordinary comforts of life, lacking sleep. 'Whilst the engine runs the people must work—men, women, and children are yoked together with iron and steam. The animal machine . . . is chained fast to the iron machine, which knows no suffering and no weariness.' The iron-hearted men who decreed this state of affairs matched well their iron machines; and few of that generation realized that they were doing wrong.

<sup>1</sup> 'Over the new towns—Manchester, Leeds, Sheffield, Birmingham—are hung the banners and scutcheons of the industrial lords, whose indentures and service bind a host more numerous and more dependent than were ever sworn to the bear and ragged staff of a Neville.' (Grant Robertson, *England under the Hanoverians*.)

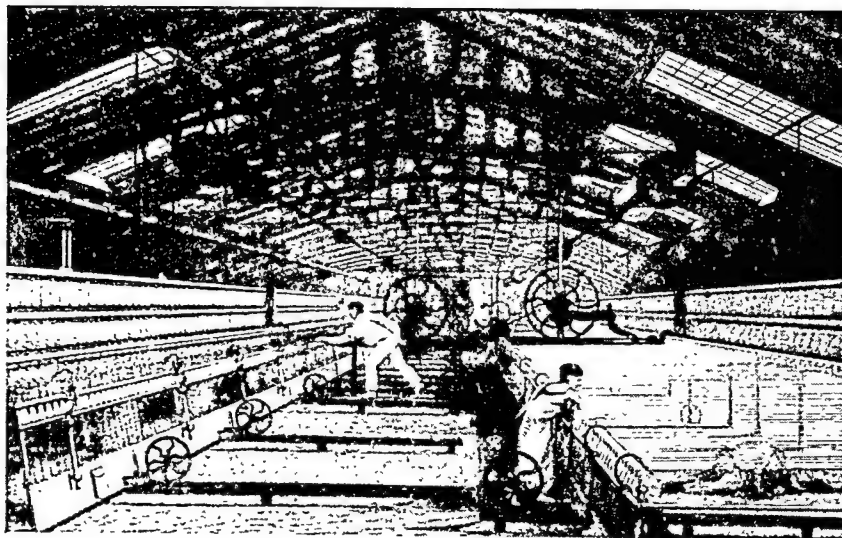
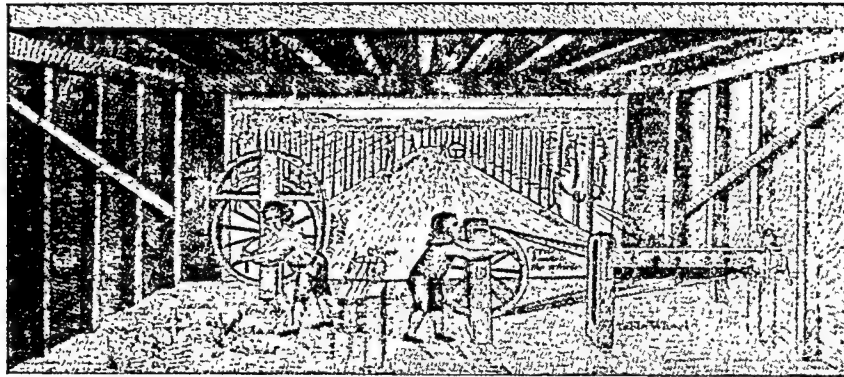
<sup>2</sup> The following were some of the fines inflicted on the workmen at Tyldesley, near Manchester:

Any spinner found with his window open	. 1s.
„ „ „ dirty at his work	. 1s.
„ „ „ washing himself	. 1s.
„ „ „ heard whistling	. 1s.

(From Hammond, *Town Labourer*.)

<sup>3</sup> Chapter XXXVII, Section 2.





The coming of the Factory System. *Above*, children at work in a rope factory in the eighteenth century. *Below*, a cotton factory (mule-spinning) early in the nineteenth century.

## BRITAIN AND THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

1. *Pitt's Peace Ministry*Charles  
James Fox

At the time of the negotiating of the Treaty of Versailles (1783) England was governed by a Whig ministry under Lord Shelburne.<sup>1</sup> But from this ministry, the greatest of the Whigs, Charles James Fox, was excluded. Fox was one of the most remarkable men in the history of English politics. A fast liver and an inveterate gambler, he was notorious as one of the boon companions of George, Prince of Wales, afterwards the Prince Regent (and later still King George IV). The habits of this section of 'high society' certainly would not lead us to expect that one of its members would have any serious interests. Yet Fox had. It was one of the queer contradictions of his character that he enjoyed an all-night debate in the Commons as much as he enjoyed an all-night gambling orgy. He was no heartless rake—like his royal companion—with no feelings beyond the gratification of his own pleasures; he was a kindly man, and he had a real love of English liberty. Like most of the Whigs, he sympathized with the American Revolution; and later on he was foremost among prominent Englishmen in sympathizing with the French Revolution, though doing so cost him both loss of prestige and loss of friends. His conduct then proved that the man of fashion had convictions and principles which he valued above popularity or the friendship of princes.

The Fox-  
North  
Ministry

In 1783 Fox made a premature and unwise bid for power: he made a political alliance with Lord North, who for so many years had been the king's trusted servant. George was naturally angry at the 'desertion' of North, but for the moment he could do nothing. Fox and North together commanded a large majority in the House of Commons, and the king was obliged to appoint a new ministry, in which these unnatural allies were both made Secretaries of State. But the king had not long to wait for his revenge. Fox prepared an India Bill—an improve-

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 635.

ment on the Regulating Act passed by North ten years before<sup>1</sup> —which passed the House of Commons. But the Upper House, strongly influenced by the king, threw it out. The king, with unseemly haste, at once sent a message to Fox and North that he had dispensed with their services. So fell the Fox-North Coalition, after eight months of power.

April-  
December  
1783

The king's choice now fell on young William Pitt,<sup>2</sup> aged 24, who had been Chancellor of the Exchequer under Shelburne. Pitt was appointed Prime Minister (December 1783), a position which he held for the next seventeen years. The General Election of 1784 confirmed the king's choice; the supporters of North and of Fox lost seat after seat, and the young Premier commanded the confidence of King, Lords, and Commons. This election showed that, even before the great Reform Bill, the people of Britain could express their will when they felt deeply enough on a subject. Called in to save the king from Fox and North, William Pitt proved to be something more than a stop-gap. 'A kingdom trusted to a schoolboy's care', laughed his enemies; but the 'schoolboy' proved the master of them all. He also proved to be the king's master. George III came to rely entirely on Pitt, whose position was as supreme as Walpole's had been. The decline of the king's mental powers also favoured the ascendancy of the Prime Minister. Since Pitt's day that ascendancy has never been lost; the great powers enjoyed by the first minister of the Crown date from the premiership of William Pitt.

William  
Pitt,  
Prime  
Minister  
1783-1801

Importance  
of his  
Premiership

Born in the year of victories, 1759, the second son of the Great Commoner, the younger Pitt had been trained from earliest youth to a political career. His serious boyhood, his precocious learning, and his own and his father's ambition, all combined to deprive Pitt of the best thing in life—his youth. For Pitt was never young, never knew a life free from care; and when at last, prematurely aged, he sank under the tremendous burden of the Napoleonic War, he had scarcely reached middle

Character  
of William  
Pitt

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter XXXIV.

<sup>2</sup> Connect *Pitt the Elder* (1708-78), the Great Commoner, afterwards Lord Chatham, with the period of Clive and Wolfe and the American Revolution; and his son, *Pitt the Younger* (1759-1806), with the period of Napoleon and the French Revolution.

age. Though he could unbend in private, among a few intimate friends, his manner to colleagues and political foes alike was one of haughty reserve. In the House of Commons, in an age of great debaters, Pitt was always impressive, though he was not his father's equal as an orator. Like his father, he was absolutely indifferent to money. He scorned titles and rewards for himself, though he lavished them—with feelings not unmingled with contempt—on others. His private life was singularly free from the vices of the time, with the exception of that of heavy drinking. Pitt, like most men of that generation, drank far more than was good for his health, particularly of port; and this habit, combined with the toil of his work, helped to undermine his constitution.

Pitt's first ministry lasted seventeen years, the first ten of which (1783-93) were years of peace. His most successful measure, the India Act of 1784,<sup>1</sup> was passed in his first year of office; it settled the government of India till the Mutiny. Next, the Premier made a half-hearted attempt at Parliamentary Reform, asking leave to introduce a Bill to disfranchise some of the rotten boroughs, the owners of which were to be compensated. But a majority of the Commons (whom he had left free to vote as they liked) were hostile to the measure and he immediately dropped it (1785). In the same year Pitt also tried to bring about a commercial union between England and Ireland. This was also opposed in Parliament, and again the Premier dropped the proposal. Thus two serious questions, Parliamentary Reform and our relations with Ireland, each of which nearly caused a revolution later on, were treated on Walpole's principle—'Let sleeping dogs lie'.

It was in the realm of finance that Pitt was most happy. He held the post of Chancellor of the Exchequer himself. His Budget of 1784 reduced the high tariff on various articles (e.g. the tea duty was reduced from 50 to 12½ per cent.); this had the excellent effect of making smuggling unprofitable. The loss to the revenue was made up by a variety of taxes—e.g. on windows,<sup>2</sup> hats, and hair-powder. In 1786, Pitt estab-

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter XXXIV.

<sup>2</sup> The window tax led many people to brick up superfluous windows, which may often be observed in old Georgian houses.

lished the Sinking Fund, setting aside £1,000,000 a year—to accumulate at compound interest—to pay off the National Debt. He hoped by this means to pay off the Debt in twenty-eight years, little expecting that most of these years would be spent in piling up a further enormous debt for a great continental war.

Pitt also arranged a Commercial Treaty with France (1786). The duty on French wines was lowered, so that claret could compete in the English market with the products of Portugal; at the same time the French lowered the duty on English cotton, woollen, and steel goods. In answer to the ridiculous argument that it was wrong to make such a treaty with our 'hereditary foe', Pitt nobly declared that to say that one nation must always remain the enemy of another was weak and childish. Thus, with the co-operation of the French ministers, the first step was taken towards the realization of Adam Smith's ideal of Free Trade.<sup>1</sup>

In the winter of 1788 political affairs were thrown into confusion by the illness of the king, who had a serious attack of insanity. Fox and the Whigs proposed that the royal powers should be exercised in full by the Prince of Wales, since they knew that the prince would at once dismiss Pitt and install them in power. This project was defeated by the Government's Regency Bill (1789), by which the prince was to rule as Regent, but with strictly limited powers. The king recovered before the Bill came into operation.

In foreign affairs, Pitt scored one success. The Spaniards in America had advanced up the Pacific coast from California; in 1789 they ejected some English settlers from Nootka Sound, in Vancouver. Pitt insisted that the English were the first comers, and that the island was an English possession. The Spaniards gave way, and so the future of what is now British Columbia was assured (1790).

Pitt was less successful in his relations with Russia. The Empress Catherine the Great was busy seizing territory along the Black Sea from Turkey. When Pitt protested (1791) against the seizure of Ochakov, Catherine took no notice, and it was obvious that British diplomacy was powerless in the

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 677.

east of Europe.<sup>1</sup> Shortly afterwards Catherine proceeded, with the aid of the King of Prussia, to despoil her defenceless neighbour, Poland, which soon ceased to exist as an independent country. (Second and Third Partitions of Poland, 1793 and 1795.) But by that time the outbreak of the Revolution in France had directed the attention of our statesmen elsewhere.

Partitions  
of Poland

Achieve-  
ments of  
Pitt

To sum up Pitt's peace-time achievements; he was, first and foremost, a Premier of such outstanding personality that he overawed both King and Parliament. But for his advent to power our political history might have taken a very different turn. George III might have found another North, or government might have dissolved into hopeless party faction, as at the beginning of the reign. Secondly, Pitt was an extremely able Chancellor of the Exchequer, and put our national finances on a sound footing. Thirdly, he was responsible for measures settling the government of India and of Canada, both of which have deservedly been praised.<sup>2</sup>

His limita-  
tions

His limitations were, however, considerable. He was as blind as most of his class to the great revolution in industry which was taking place, and he never saw the crying need for social reform. Other reforms, the need for which was at least as urgent, he passed over: he failed to tackle the reform of Parliament, and, though he sympathized with the anti-slavery campaign, he had never sufficient political courage to strike at the evil of slavery. Pitt was not a man of vision. When the French Revolution came, he failed to realize its great importance, and at first refused to believe that it could concern other countries. But at length he was driven, against his will, into a titanic conflict with France, the end of which he did not live to see.

Humani-  
tarian  
movements

One of the most significant changes in English life during the eighteenth century was the growth of the humanitarian movement. This was due, in part, to the influence of religious societies like the Quakers and the Methodists. The two most important agitations, begun by humane men from no motive

<sup>1</sup> Pitt also intervened in Holland, and arranged a Triple Alliance between Prussia, Britain, and Holland to counteract French influence. But his policy did not prove a success.

<sup>2</sup> See Chapter XXXIV.

of self-seeking, were those conducted against the ill treatment of prisoners, and against slavery.

The apostle of prison reforms was John Howard, who spent the greater part of his life in examining the state of prisons in England and in Europe. In England he found that an iniquitous system prevailed, by which gaolers, who were paid no salary, were allowed to charge the prisoners for board and rent. Since many prisoners could not afford to pay this debt to the gaoler, they remained in prison after their sentence had expired until it was discharged; many poor wretches had been there for years. Another evil was the filthy and insanitary state of the prisons. The vileness of the prison air was such that Howard declared, after visiting the prison dungeons, that he was unable to travel in a closed carriage, as his clothes were impregnated with the stench. Prisoners were often kept in irons and otherwise ill treated; frequently they lost their reason. Such things had been going on for centuries; it is to the credit of the men of the late eighteenth century that the public conscience was at last aroused. John Howard published his *State of the Prisons* during the American War; he was thanked by Parliament for the revelations which he had made, and some of the worst evils were dealt with by legislation (1784). Howard also made several journeys on the Continent, and visited the prisons of the chief European countries. Elizabeth Fry (1780–1845), a Quaker, was a later prison reformer, and she did much to improve the conditions among women prisoners.

Perhaps the noblest achievement of the eighteenth century was the movement for the abolition of the Slave Trade. Africa had formed a slave-market for Europe since Roman times. After the Romans, the Arabs continued to raid Africa for slaves, and when the first Christian traders—the Portuguese—appeared off the West African coast in the fifteenth century, they also followed the same cruel custom. In the next century the Spaniards and Portuguese began the Atlantic slave trade, and their example was followed by the English, led by John Hawkins. This slave trade, between Africa and the West Indies or the Southern States of America, had been in progress above two hundred years when Pitt came to power, and Britain had the greatest share of it. It was in 1787 that

The Anti-Slavery Campaign (1788-1833) twelve men—of whom nine were Quakers—met together to form a Committee for the Suppression of the Slave Trade. The two most prominent members of this committee were Thomas Clarkson and William Wilberforce. Wilberforce, who was a well-known member of Parliament and a friend of Pitt, tried, for many years unsuccessfully, to persuade Parliament to abolish the Slave Trade. But it was the efforts of Clarkson and others in arousing the public conscience to the diabolical nature of the trade that ensured the eventual success of the movement. One of the worst cruelties of the whole business, apart from the actual capture of the slaves, was the way in which the negroes were crowded together in the slave-ships, which plied their dreadful trade across the Atlantic. The horrors of the ‘middle passage’, as it was called, cannot be described: suffice it to say that the ‘Black Hole’ of Calcutta was worse only in degree than the holds of the British slave-ships. It was usual for 45 per cent. of the slaves to die on the voyage to America; it was not uncommon for as many as 80 per cent. to perish.

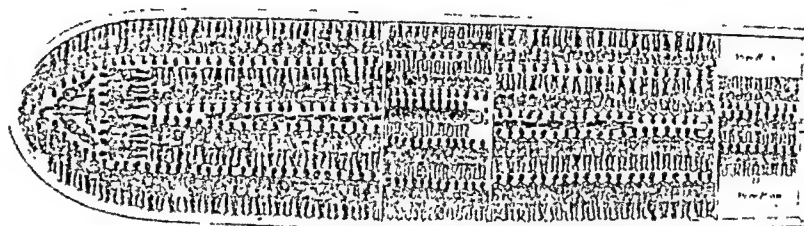
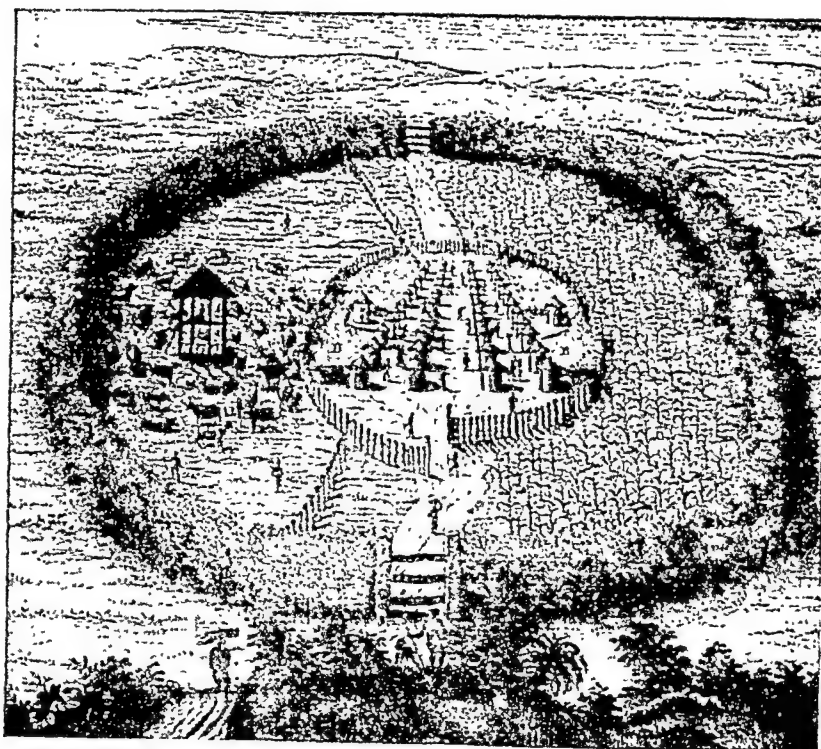
The ‘Middle Passage’ The Slave Trade was first discussed in Parliament in 1788, and in the same year a Bill was passed to check the cruelties of the ‘middle passage’. But Wilberforce had to wait another nineteen years before Parliament abolished the Slave Trade; and it was a generation after that (1833) before the slaves in the British Empire were set at liberty.<sup>1</sup>

## 2. *The French Revolution*

European Despotisms The eighteenth century has sometimes been called the Age of the Enlightened Despot. There were certainly plenty of despots in Europe, and some of them, like the Emperor Joseph II, were enlightened men. No continental country had anything to compare with the parliamentary rule under a constitutional king, which had flourished in Great Britain since 1689. The Tsars of Russia, the Hapsburg rulers of Austria, and the Kings of Prussia were all monarchs whose rule was absolute in their own dominions; and the example of these great sovereigns was imitated by the princelings of every petty German and Italian court. France, above all, was the home of The French Monarchy despotism. The grand structure of the French monarchy,

<sup>1</sup> See below, Chap. XXXIX.





#### THE SLAVE TRADE

*Above*, an African village enclosed for defence against wild beasts and slave-raiders. *Below*, a plan of the lower deck of a slave-ship, showing how 292 slaves (men, women, and children) were carried in a space 100 ft. long by 25 ft. wide.

raised by Cardinal Richelieu and Louis XIV in the seventeenth century, was the most imposing in Europe. In France, all political rivals to the power of the monarch had been ruthlessly swept away; the States-General (which had in the Middle Ages corresponded roughly with the English Parliament) had not met since 1614.

The French  
Nobility

There were great social inequalities in France. The nobles had indeed lost all political power; but they had retained, from medieval times, the social privileges attaching to their rank. They were exempt from the payment of the heavier taxes which pressed so hardly on their inferiors; and they were lords of their own villages, where the peasant was forced, as in the Middle Ages, to contribute to the upkeep of the château. The French nobility were an idle class, debarred by custom from marrying with the lower orders; and so there was a great gulf fixed between them and the rest of the population. The lot of the peasants was extremely hard. The government took 50 per cent. of their earnings in taxation, the lord of the château another 30 per cent.

The  
Peasants  
and the  
Bourgeoisie

It was not, however, the miseries of the peasants which directly produced the French Revolution; nor, indeed, were the hardships they endured as bad as those endured by other European workers. The ferment of ideas, which produced the Revolution, arose in the middle class, the bourgeoisie, which included tradesmen, lawyers, doctors, and all the thinking and reading section of the community. The influence of the great French writers of the period on this class was profound.

Voltaire  
(1694-1778)

Voltaire, who spent the latter part of his life in exile in Switzerland, attacked injustice wherever he saw it. He had himself suffered under the monstrous system of *lettres de cachet*, whereby the French government was enabled to imprison any man for an indefinite period without trial, and without cause shown. Voltaire cried out against the barbarous laws, relics of the Middle Ages, by which, in France, men were sent to a cruel death, or to lifelong imprisonment, for small offences. In particular, Voltaire attacked the Catholic Church for persecuting men in the name of religion. His writings helped to awaken a public conscience in France.

Rousseau

Another writer whose work had a profound effect was Jean

Jacques Rousseau. In his famous book, *The Social Contract*, Rousseau developed the idea that kings and rulers governed states owing to a contract with their subjects. If the rulers did not fulfil this contract, then it was the right and duty of the people to oppose them.<sup>1</sup> They would then return to a 'state of nature', where everything was good and beautiful, and would be able to set up a democracy which—in small states at least—he declares to be the best form of government. Historically this argument is unsound, since both the 'contract' and the beauty of a 'state of nature' are imaginary. But Rousseau's reasoning fired many thinkers in France; it helped to turn men's minds towards revolution. When the opportunity came, many followers of Rousseau were ready to hack the old system to pieces and set up a new society in its place.

It was financial difficulties which brought the old French monarchy to its ruin. The effort of the Maritime War (1778–83)<sup>2</sup> had indeed fulfilled its object in defeating Britain; but the expense of the war crippled the French Government. Louis XVI (1774–92), a well-meaning young man, gave his confidence to several finance ministers in turn, but they were all unable to make the French state solvent. The peasants were already taxed to the limit of endurance; to impose a drastic tax on the property of the nobles might have solved the difficulty but no one contemplated taking such a step. Finally, in May 1789, Louis summoned the States-General, which had not met for 175 years.

Financial  
troubles

Meeting of  
the States-  
General  
May 1789

The States-General, which met at Versailles, was divided into three 'estates': clergy, nobles, and the Tiers État. It voted by estates, not by the number of individual votes: and the Tiers État saw that they would always be outvoted by the other two. After some quarrelling with the other estates, the Tiers État insisted on the formation of a National Assembly,<sup>3</sup> and swore that it should not separate until it had drawn up a new

<sup>1</sup> Rousseau's *Le Contrat Social* (1760) opened with the bold statement 'Man is born free, yet he is everywhere in chains'. The *American Declaration of Independence* (1776) borrowed his theories of the rights of man, including the 'sacred rights of insurrection'.

<sup>2</sup> See above, pp. 631–5.

<sup>3</sup> The National Assembly contained nearly all the members of the Tiers État, and some members of the other two estates.

constitution for France. Louis XVI consented to this arrangement, and so the National Assembly set to work. But very soon King Louis, spurred on by his spirited queen, Marie Antoinette, tried to overawe the Assembly by a display of military force. The Paris mob then interfered for the first, but not for the last, time in the Revolution. There was a riot during which the old state prison, the Bastille, was burnt to the ground (July 1789). Later in this memorable year, the mob forcibly escorted the king, queen, and members of the royal family from Versailles to Paris, where they took up their abode in the Tuileries Palace.

Fall of the  
Bastille  
July 1789

Work of the  
Constituent  
Assembly

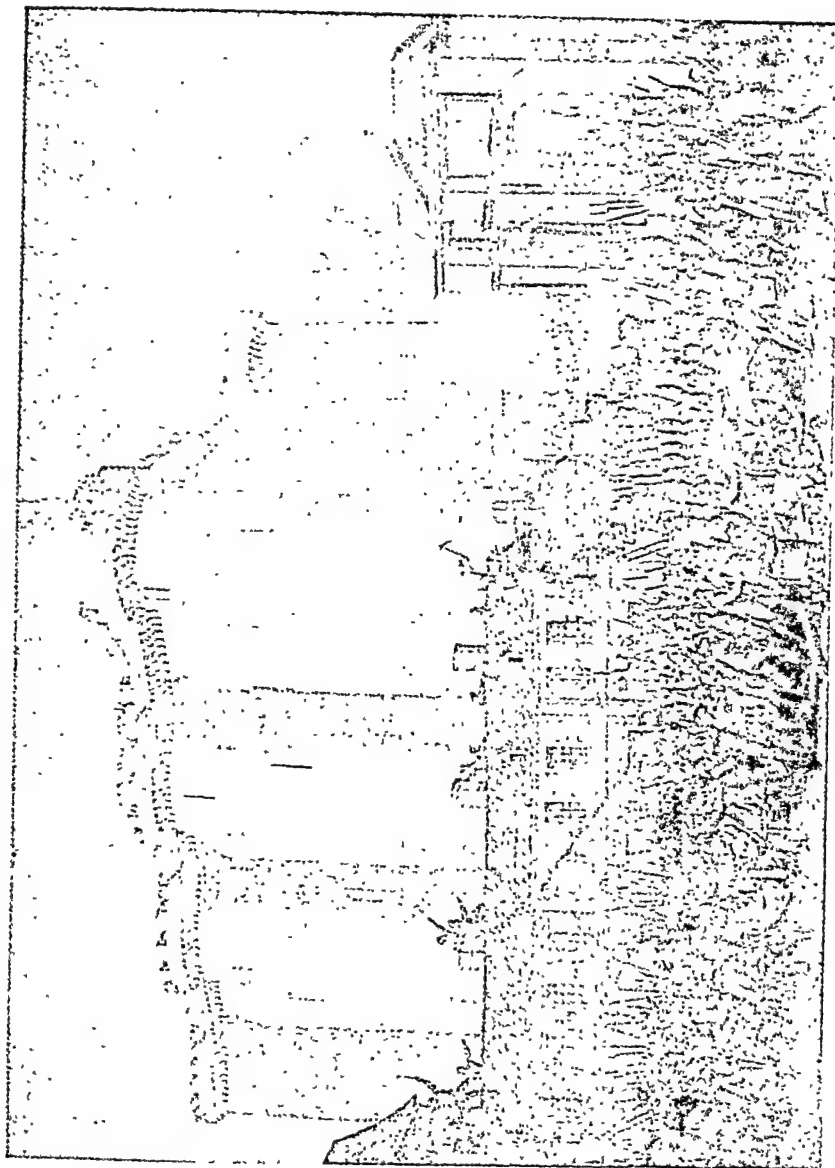
Declaration  
of the  
Rights of  
Man, 1789

The work of the Constituent Assembly, as the National Assembly was now called,<sup>1</sup> went on uninterruptedly after the summer of 1789. The constitution-makers derived their ideas partly from the example of England, partly from the successful revolution which had just taken place in America, and partly from general theories, such as those of Rousseau. Modelling their conduct on that of the Americans, the French drew up a declaration, called the Declaration of the Rights of Man (August 1789). Some of the clauses of this famous document laid down that men are born free and equal in rights; that sovereignty resides in the people; that law is the expression of the general will; and that no man should be molested for his opinions, provided his conduct does not injure the community. A few days after the issue of this Declaration, an enthusiastic Assembly declared that the remains of feudalism, such as feudal dues paid to the nobles, should be abolished throughout France; and many nobles voluntarily gave up their privileges.

The French  
Constitu-  
tion of 1790

The new constitution was far from perfect, but it was an improvement on the former government of Louis XVI. The absolute monarchy was replaced by a limited monarchy; the king could delay the action of the laws in certain cases, but he could not override them. There was to be one Assembly elected by the people, who were also to elect their own officials, including the civil servants, judges, and even the bishops and clergy. Louis XVI tried to escape from a humiliating position—as he considered it—by flight from the country. He was

<sup>1</sup> 'Constituent', because its work was to draw up a new constitution.



THE TAKING OF THE BASTILLE BY THE REVOLUTIONARY MOB IN JULY 1789

detected near the frontier at Varennes, and brought back to Paris a prisoner (June 1791).

Legislative  
Assembly  
1791-2

The Meeting of the Legislative Assembly—as the Assembly elected under the new constitution was called—took place in September 1791. At first it seemed that the constitution would work, and that the Revolution was over. But it was not so.

The Clergy

The king was horrified at the laws which reduced the priests throughout France to the level of servants of the state; no good Catholic could agree with such an arrangement. In the country districts a revolt, religious in character, began; with this the king was in full sympathy. Another cause of friction was the action of certain of the nobility, who had fled across the frontier to Germany, and who were intriguing with the German princes against the new French Government. The Assembly now decided to confiscate the property of these emigrés, as they were called. The king disapproved; his own brothers were among the emigrés. But he soon resolved that he must himself rely on foreign help, if the ancient monarchy of France was ever to be restored.

The  
Emigrés

Meanwhile, the emigrés were doing their best to persuade the German governments to act against France. In August 1791, Austria and Prussia issued a Declaration, from Pillnitz, warning the revolutionaries to do no harm to the king. But, when Louis XVI agreed to the new constitution, they declared themselves satisfied. It is untrue to say that France was attacked by the military monarchies of Europe; France went to war in order to consolidate the Revolution. The Girondists—the party in power—declared war on 20 April 1792; and Austria and Prussia launched a half-hearted attack.

War with  
Austria and  
Prussia  
1792

Revolution  
of 10 Aug.  
1792

The advance of the German armies under the Duke of Brunswick, and the suspicion that the king was intriguing with the enemy, produced a violent revolution in Paris, which involved the fall of the monarchy. The Revolution of 10 August (1792) was engineered by the extremist party, known as the Jacobins. The Tuileries was stormed and taken, and the king's Swiss guards massacred. Louis XVI surrendered, and the monarchy was formally abolished. A month later a new assembly, called the Convention (1792-5) was elected. At the same time, Republican armies were raised all over France to

defend the country and the Revolution. It was then that the September Massacres, which horrified Europe, took place in Paris. Thousands of royalists, priests, and nobles were dragged out of prison and done to death in the streets. The massacre was caused by a fear that the prisoners might escape, and that it was not safe to leave them behind while the army marched away to defend the frontier.

September  
Massacres

A tremendous enthusiasm inspired the French soldiers as they marched, singing the new revolutionary song, the *Marseillaise*, to defend the Republic. The republican watchwords were 'Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity'; and for these ideals the soldiers of the Revolution were ready to die. The history of the world was changed by the battle of Valmy (September 1792) when Brunswick's army retreated before the ragged and ill-disciplined but enthusiastic soldiers of the Republic.<sup>1</sup> Henceforth nothing could stop the French; they defeated the well-drilled soldiers of the benevolent despots time and time again, against all military calculation.

Valmy  
1792

In Paris, enthusiasm for the Revolution increased after Valmy; the Convention passed a resolution saying that France would help all nations struggling to be free. The king was brought to trial and executed as a traitor to his country (January 1793). 'We fling down, as a gage of battle,' said Danton, 'the head of a king.' The Jacobins knew now that they must win or die. Soon the more moderate men were excluded from power; a Reign of Terror began, under the auspices of the cruel but efficient Committee of Public Safety.

Execution  
of  
Louis XVI  
1793

To understand the events of the Reign of Terror, we must first appreciate the fact that France was now fighting for her life against a Europe fearful of revolution and bent on her destruction. The alliance of Britain (1793), Austria, Prussia, and Spain was a formidable one; the French were attacked on all their frontiers. It was in these circumstances that the Committee of Public Safety ruled with a ruthlessness seldom paralleled in the history of the world. Royalist prisoners were

The Reign  
of Terror  
1793-4

<sup>1</sup> The battle itself was a very small affair: it is important because of its results. Dumouriez, the French commander, opened negotiations with Brunswick after the battle, with the result that the threat to Paris was removed.

first put to death; then, as the inner circle of the revolutionary leaders narrowed, all those who disagreed with the extremists were guillotined. The Catholic-Royalist rebellions in Brittany, La Vendée, and Lyons were crushed with fearful barbarities; the waters of the Rhone and the Loire ran red with the blood of the enemies of the Republic. Within two years—by 1795—these methods had succeeded; opposition to the Revolution in France itself was stamped out. And, by that time, the Jacobin armies were marching in triumph over their neighbours' territories.<sup>1</sup>

As the danger was removed, the Terror died away; and among the things drowned in its blood was the idealism of the early revolutionaries. Those who survived in positions of power were self-seeking intriguers. The Committee of Public Safety was abolished, and the Convention gave way to a new Government called the Directory (five Directors and two Assemblies) which ruled France for five years (1795-9). It was during these years that the military genius of Napoleon Bonaparte was first shown to the world.

### 3. *Burke, Fox, and Pitt*

In England the first news of the French Revolution was received by all classes with feelings of delight. When Fox heard of the fall of the Bastille, he said: 'How much the greatest event it is in the history of the world, and how much the best!' The ancient despotism of the Bourbons, so long Britain's most dangerous enemy, was at last brought low. A parliamentary experiment was to be tried in France, and the labours of the National Assembly were followed sympathetically.

The publication of Burke's *Reflections on the French Revolution* (1790) struck a different note. Burke warned his readers that power in France would certainly pass into more and more violent hands as the Revolution proceeded, and that the probable outcome would be a military despotism. The correctness of these prophecies—which were fulfilled in the Reign of Terror and the advent of Napoleon—was certainly remarkable. But, in spite of this, Burke entirely failed to appreciate the true significance of the French Revolution. He foresaw, more

<sup>1</sup> See next Chapter.



clearly than most men, its immediate consequences; he was blind to its effects on the history of the world. For the French Revolution had sounded the trumpet-call of Liberty; wherever that call was heard, it meant the end of the autocratic *ancien régime* of priest and king. In France itself the Jacobins made mistakes, and committed crimes; but at least the old days of the starving peasant and the rich seigneur were gone, never to return.

Burke's book, which had a profound effect in England, showed the reaction of the governing classes to the growing anarchy in France. To him, and to them, the English constitution, set up by the 'Glorious Revolution' of 1688, was the last word in perfection; beyond that he could not see. England had been ruled for a hundred years by her aristocracy; that the aristocracy should ever share its power with the common people was, in 1789, a strange and revolting idea. It was the fear that the example of the Jacobins might be followed in England that attracted the governing classes to Burke's view. The Revolution was dangerous, said Burke, because it included attacks on property; the upholders of the rights of property must rally in their own defence. These views naturally gained ground after the September Massacres (1792) and the execution of Louis XVI (1793) had shown the correctness of Burke's opinion of the course of the Revolution.

A reply to Burke was forthcoming when Tom Paine issued his *Rights of Man* (1791). Paine, an English Quaker's son who had lived in America, was a strong supporter of the American and French Revolutions. His pamphlet—which sold in tens of thousands—insisted that the people had the right to alter any existing government at their pleasure. These democratic views found many supporters in England; it was only when (in 1792) Paine published the second part of his book that he became unpopular. For then he praised the republican form of government; and people were so alarmed by events in France that they rallied to the established order and the 'good old king'.

The opinions expressed in Burke's *Reflections* on the one hand, and in Paine's *Rights of Man* on the other, reflected the two extremes of English thought. The bulk of the nation, disgusted by the excesses in France, took Burke's view. In

Paine's  
*Rights of  
Man*  
1791-2

The Whig  
Split, 1792

politics, a large majority of the Whig party, led by the Duke of Portland and by Burke, went over to Pitt, and helped to swell the ranks of the Tories. Fox quarrelled with Burke and, together with his young friend Charles Grey, formed a new Whig party of his own (1792). Charles Grey, a young man of noble family, destined to give England Parliamentary Reform forty years later, was the founder of a society called the 'Friends of the People', the object of which was to encourage democratic ideas in England. The action of Fox and Grey in breaking away from Burke, and holding a point of view diametrically opposed to that of most of their own class, was extremely important. It kept alive a liberal-minded spirit at a time when all ideas of liberty were in danger of being swept away in the tide of war.

War (1793) and Reaction War was declared in 1793.<sup>1</sup> War meant that the mildest suggestion of reform was labelled 'Jacobin'—something favouring the enemies of England. War meant that Pitt put aside whatever ideas of liberty he had ever held. Something very like a panic seized the rulers of England. During 1793 and 1794, various men were tried for holding democratic opinions which we should now consider very ordinary; people were imprisoned merely for advocating 'representative government'. Two men, Muir and Palmer, were sentenced by the Scottish judge, Braxfield, to transportation to Botany Bay for holding such opinions. Then, in 1794, came the trial of Thomas Hardy, who had founded a working-men's club, called the Corresponding Society. Hardy was accused of treason, and tried for his life. As there was no evidence to convict him, he was acquitted; after this the panic somewhat subsided.<sup>2</sup> But in the same year (1794) the Government suspended the Habeas Corpus Act, which meant that any suspected 'Jacobins' could be seized and kept in prison without trial. Thus one of the fundamental bases of English liberty was attacked under the stress of the panic caused by the French Revolution.

These were dark days indeed for England, and for English liberty. The war, like most other wars, was turning out to be

<sup>1</sup> See next Chapter.

<sup>2</sup> Grey said that, if Hardy had been convicted, his own life would not have been safe.

a longer and harder struggle than was at first anticipated. There was a series of bad harvests; poverty and destitution gripped the land. Meanwhile 'wage-slaves' in factories and negro slaves in cotton plantations made the wheels of industry revolve. Humane men suggested reforms, but Pitt had now no ears for reformers. His Government was concerned only with the danger from Jacobins—real Jacobins in France, possible Jacobins in England.

One remedy—and that a bad one—was tried to relieve the labouring population. The Berkshire magistrates met (1795) at the Pelican Inn, Speenhamland,<sup>1</sup> near Newbury, to discuss the wages of labourers. They saw that something must be done to relieve poverty and suffering, and they decided to make up wages out of the parish rates. They drew up a scale by which the parishes had to make up a man's wage to 3s. a week for himself, and 1s. 6d. each for the members of his family. At this time the loaf cost 1s.; if the price of bread rose, the scale was to rise with it. This system had three bad results. First, it encouraged masters to pay lower wages, since they knew that the rate-payers would have to make up the deficiency; secondly, it thrust an unfair burden on the rate-payers;<sup>2</sup> thirdly, it pauperized the working population by giving them a 'dole' instead of a fair wage. Nevertheless, the Speenhamland system was adopted in all the other counties, and it remained in force for another forty years.

A few years after this, the Government, still fearing for the preservation of law and order, struck a blow at the factory workers. By the Combination Acts (1799 and 1800), it was made a punishable offence for workmen to combine with each other for the purpose of demanding an increase in wages. Trades Unions, which were already in existence, were thus made illegal. Two ideas inspired this legislation. First, workmen's unions were regarded as a political danger, for the Government was still nervous of Jacobins. Secondly, as we

<sup>1</sup> The system became general after 1795, and Speenhamland gave its name to it. But rates in aid of wages had been given intermittently for years before.

<sup>2</sup> The Poor Rate for the whole country was under 2 millions in 1783; in 1813 it was 6½ millions.

Distress of  
the Country

The  
Speenham-  
land  
decision  
1795

Its defects

The  
Combina-  
tion Acts  
1799 and  
1800

have seen above,<sup>1</sup> Parliament considered that the masters of industry must be given a free hand, and therefore that their workmen ought not to combine against them. The Combination Act remained in force for a quarter of a century.

Deprived of their land by the Enclosure system, pauperized by Speenhamland, and victimized by the factory-owners, the poor of England were hard hit during the time of George III. At the same time, the liberty of the subject sadly declined; the trials for sedition, the suspension of Habeas Corpus, and the passing of the Combination Acts meant that all hope of reform was indefinitely postponed. The excuse for all this was the grave danger of the country in the midst of the French Revolutionary War (see next chapter).

#### 4. *The Romantic Revival*

The period of the French Revolution and the wars which followed it coincides with what is called the 'Romantic Revival' in English literature, a period only second in importance to the Age of Shakespeare. It derives its character from the fact that English poetry then recovered its naturalness and its delight in simple everyday things. The poets of the age were in revolt against the formality of the eighteenth century; the Romantic Revival was a return to Nature.

A return  
to Nature

This revived interest in Nature was intimately connected with the stirring political events of the time. Wordsworth, the prophet of the age, spent his young manhood in the stormy times of the French Revolution; Keats, Shelley, and Byron all grew up in the shadow of the great French war.

The Romantic Revival in England occurred just after the death of the greatest poet whom the sister country, Scotland, had produced. Robert Burns, who died in 1796,<sup>2</sup> was the son of a peasant. But, like many Scottish peasants' sons, he was brought up with a knowledge of literature, especially of the old ballad poetry of the north. The author of 'Auld Lang Syne'

Robert  
Burns

<sup>1</sup> See Section 5, Chapter XXX. The Government forbade Combinations among the masters as well as among the workmen; but the employers were so few in number, comparatively, that the Act made no difference, and they continued to make arrangements among themselves.

<sup>2</sup> He was the same age as Pitt, but he died even younger, at thirty-seven.

and of a dozen other songs equally well known (e.g. 'The Banks o' Doon' and 'Ae Fond Kiss') is rightly acclaimed as the national poet of Scotland. The note of pathos is often found in Burns's love songs ('When I think on the happy days I spent wi' you, my dearie'); and his generous, large-hearted nature could feel even the troubles of the 'beasties' and birds, as well as of men:

Ilk happing<sup>1</sup> bird, wee helpless thing!  
That, in the merry months of spring,  
Delighted me to hear thee sing,  
What comes o' thee?  
Whare wilt thou cour thy chittering wing  
An' close thy e'e?

Two years after the death of Burns, *Lyrical Ballads* was published. It was the work of two great English poets, William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge.

Wordsworth was born<sup>2</sup> at Cockermouth, Cumberland, and went to school at Hawkshead Grammar School, where they still show you the tiny schoolroom in which the poet learnt his lessons. From school, Wordsworth passed to St. John's College, Cambridge, and during one vacation he paid his first visit to France, then in the throes of revolution. In 1795 he met Coleridge, and the two afterwards settled down in neighbouring Somerset villages to produce, jointly, a book of poems called *Lyrical Ballads* (1798).

William  
Words-  
worth  
(1770-1850)

Coleridge  
(1772-1834)

According to the Preface of this book, the poets' object was 'to choose incidents and situations from common life, and to relate and describe them . . . in a selection of language really used by men'. This was the object which Wordsworth pursued throughout his life; simplicity, both of subject-matter and language, was the key-note of his writing. It is the setting forth of these views which makes the publication of the *Lyrical Ballads* an important landmark in English literature. Apart from the authors' views, the book would have been important if

*Lyrical  
Ballads*  
1798

<sup>1</sup> 'Each hopping.'

<sup>2</sup> Wordsworth, like Beethoven, was born in the year 1770. J. M. W. Turner, one of the greatest exponents of Nature in colour, was born five years after Wordsworth. See the fine collection of Turners in the Tate Gallery, London.

only for its inclusion of Coleridge's *Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, one of the half-dozen greatest poems in the English language. The sense of horror which the author conveys in some passages—

*The Ancient  
Mariner*

The many men, so beautifull  
And they all dead did lie;  
And a thousand thousand slimy things  
Lived on; and so did I.

—is only equalled in intensity by the beauty which he portrays in others:

A noise like of a hidden brook,  
In the leafy month of June,  
That to the sleeping woods all night  
Singeth a quiet tune.

To return to Wordsworth, it is worth while to examine the two most potent influences on his life, because they were typical of the new age that was dawning. First he was deeply influenced by the French Revolution, which he witnessed during his first visit to France. He has described this influence in his *The Prelude* (written 1799-1805):

*Words-  
worth's  
Prelude*

O pleasant exercise of hope and joy!  
For mighty were the auxiliars which then stood  
Upon our side, us who were strong in love!  
Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive,  
But to be young was very Heaven!

*Influence of  
the French  
Revolution* No one will ever understand the French Revolution who does not appreciate the fact that it was welcomed by youthful, ardent spirits such as Wordsworth's. He lived indeed to see his first hopes for the freedom of mankind crushed; he witnessed the tyranny of Napoleon, and the overthrow of liberty in the land of its new birth.<sup>1</sup>

*Influence of  
Nature* The second influence on Wordsworth's character came from his boyhood; it was that of Nature, as he knew and loved her in the hills and dales of the Lake District. In 1808, when he was thirty-eight, Wordsworth retired to the Lakes, and lived there for the remaining forty-two years of his life. Henceforth he abjured the 'busy haunts of men', and found in Nature all the happiness that life could give.

<sup>1</sup> See next Chapter.

To appreciate the services of Wordsworth and the 'Lake School', not only to English literature but to English life, it is necessary to understand the entirely different feelings with which the beauties of Nature were regarded by our ancestors. John Evelyn, the diarist, when he saw the lovely forest of Fontainebleau (in 1644), thus described it: 'By the way we passed through a forest so prodigiously encompassed with hideous rocks . . . that I think the like is nowhere to be found more horrid and solitary.' Again, Defoe (in 1725) describes Westmorland, which Wordsworth so loved, as 'a county eminent only for being the wildest, most barren and frightful of any that I have passed over in England or in Wales'.

That these opinions are no longer held by English people is due largely to the influence of Wordsworth and his contemporaries. His own joy in natural beauty is shown in nearly every poem that he wrote, and especially in the *Ode on the Intimations of Immortality*, and in *Tintern Abbey*:

How oft, in spirit, have I turn'd to thee,  
O sylvan Wye, thou wanderer thro' the woods!  
How often has my spirit turn'd to thee!

A very different character from the quiet poet of the Lakes was Lord Byron. Byron, the spoiled child of Fortune, attained European fame as a poet before he was thirty. In spite of his faults—and they were many—Byron never lost the early enthusiasm for liberty which he derived from the French Revolution; and he died at last in a foreign land, fighting against the Turks for the freedom of the Greece he loved so well. An equally ardent spirit was Percy Bysshe Shelley, who was sent down from Oxford for writing a pamphlet called *The Necessity of Atheism*. Shelley spent a brief, unhappy life in fighting forces too strong for him. His hatred of all forms of tyranny is shown in his political poems (1818-21); but his lasting title to fame rests on *Prometheus Unbound*, *Adonais*, and on his many beautiful lyrics, such as the *Ode to the West Wind*, and the lyric beginning,

I dream'd that as I wandered by the way  
Bare Winter suddenly was changed to Spring.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Golden Treasury*, No. 268.

Shelley was drowned off Leghorn in 1822, when he was only thirty and at the height of his powers. John Keats, who also died in Italy before he was twenty-five,<sup>1</sup> was a friend of Shelley and Byron. His chief works are *Endymion*, *Hyperion*, *The Eve of St. Agnes*, and his wonderful odes—e.g. *Ode to a Nightingale*, *Ode on a Grecian Urn*, and *To Autumn*—which are among the loveliest things in the English language. In *La Belle Dame Sans Merci* we get a glimpse of almost uncanny beauty, which reminds us of some of the passages of the *Ancient Mariner*.

A contemporary of these short-lived poets was Sir Walter Scott. His lays and ballads were the outcome of a life spent in deep reading of Scottish history, and of a mind saturated with the legends of the Border. His *Lay of the Last Minstrel* (1805) achieved an immediate success; it was shortly followed by *Marmion* and the *Lady of the Lake*. In 1814, Scott wrote his first novel, *Waverley*, the first of the long series of the Waverley Novels, by the writing of which Scott strove, in his later years, to pay off the burden of a large debt. The best of the Waverley Novels are those which deal with Scottish history, like *The Heart of Midlothian* and *Old Mortality*.

<sup>1</sup> Shelley's *Adonais* (1821) is an elegy on the death of John Keats.



## XXXII

### THE GREAT FRENCH WAR (1793-1815)

#### I. *The First Coalition*

THE outbreak of the French Revolution, and its progress to the summer of 1792, did not inspire British statesmen with a wish to interfere with the course of events in France. As we have seen, the Germanic powers, as early as April 1792, went to war with the avowed purpose of restoring the French monarchy to its former position. Pitt did not share that aim. As late as February (1792) he made a speech, prophesying fifteen years of peace for Britain, and moved a reduction in our military and naval forces. Exactly twelve months later, Britain embarked on one of the longest wars in modern history.

It was the events of the last five months of 1792 that caused Pitt to change his mind. In September came the massacres in Paris, which filled most Englishmen with horror and alarm. In November the French troops invaded the Austrian Netherlands (Belgium) and rapidly overran that country. In the same month, the Convention issued a decree (19 November) saying that they would help all nations who wished to regain their liberty.<sup>1</sup> The French, moreover, declared the navigation of the River Scheldt open, any treaties to the contrary notwithstanding. As Britain had, for the benefit of Holland, signed treaties<sup>2</sup> which gave the control of the Scheldt to the Dutch, she could not approve of the French action. Besides, Antwerp in French hands might prove a serious rival to the Port of London. Pitt therefore gave the British answer to the French claims in memorable words: 'England will never consent that France shall arrogate the power of annulling at her pleasure, and under the pretence of a pretended natural right, of which

Pitt and  
Peace  
February  
1792

French  
aggression  
1792

The  
Scheldt

<sup>1</sup> 'La Convention Nationale déclare au nom de la Nation Française qu'elle accordera fraternité et secours à tous les peuples qui voudront recouvrer leur liberté.'

<sup>2</sup> The last one was signed in 1788. The British were, in their own interest, anxious to prevent the development of Antwerp.

she makes herself the only judge, the political system of Europe, established by solemn treaties and guaranteed by the consent of all the Powers.'

The execution of Louis XVI in January 1793 inflamed all England against France, and there was now no hope of preserving peace. War was declared by the Convention on Britain and Holland on 1 February 1793. George III wrote to Lord Grenville, the Foreign Secretary, saying that the declaration of war 'is highly agreeable to me'. He went on to say that England would, he hoped, 'curb the insolence of those despots (the French government) and be the means of restoring some degree of order to that unprincipled country, whose aim at present is to destroy the foundations of every civilized state'.

The war which thus broke out continued with two brief intervals for twenty-two years. Pitt's conception of waging it was twofold. First, he used British money to maintain a European coalition against France. He looked to his allies, to whom he paid subsidies in cash, to bear the brunt of the land attack on the common enemy; our own military effort was very small. Secondly, he intended to use British naval power<sup>1</sup> to destroy French commerce, to seize French colonies, and to deliver attacks on the French Atlantic and Mediterranean ports.

The First Coalition (1793-5) consisted of Britain, Austria, Prussia, Holland, Spain, and Sardinia. A small British army, under the Duke of York, was sent to assist the Austrians and Prussians in the Netherlands. The allied efforts, however, were of little avail; the French kept their hold on Belgium, and invaded Holland. The Dutch navy, held fast in the frozen Rhine, was captured by a detachment of French cavalry (1794). Holland became, like Belgium, an appanage of France;<sup>2</sup> the Dutch were forced to change sides and fight against their former allies.

Britain's efforts to aid the Royalists in France were no more

<sup>1</sup> It was during these French Wars that Charles Dibdin wrote his popular sea-songs (e.g. *Tom Bowling*), and Thomas Campbell his war-songs (e.g. *Ye Mariners of England*).

<sup>2</sup> Belgium was incorporated in France; Holland became the Batavian Republic.

successful than the Netherlands campaign. An expedition sent to Quiberon in Brittany arrived too late to help the Royalists there. Then Admiral Hood entered Toulon harbour (1793) at the invitation of the citizens, who were opposed to the Revolution. But a Republican army besieged the town, and the British fleet in the harbour was fired on by Lieutenant Bonaparte's guns, and forced to withdraw. Such was the first round of the fight between Britain and her arch-enemy. At sea, Lord Howe won a five-days' battle usually called the 'Glorious First of June' (1794), capturing six French battleships.

Admiral  
Hood at  
Toulon  
1793

First of  
June 1794

Between 1795 and 1797 England was deserted by all her allies. Holland, as we have seen, was forced into a French alliance. Then Prussia made peace (Treaty of Basle, 1795) in order to turn her attention to the subjugation of the unfortunate Poles. Poland had just been finally partitioned between the robber Powers (Prussia, Austria, and Russia) under the Second and Third Partitions (1793 and 1795).<sup>1</sup> Prussia kept out of the French war for another ten years. The Spaniards also made peace in 1795, and in the following year they decided to change sides and throw in their lot with France. This caused the British to withdraw their Mediterranean fleet to Gibraltar (January 1797).

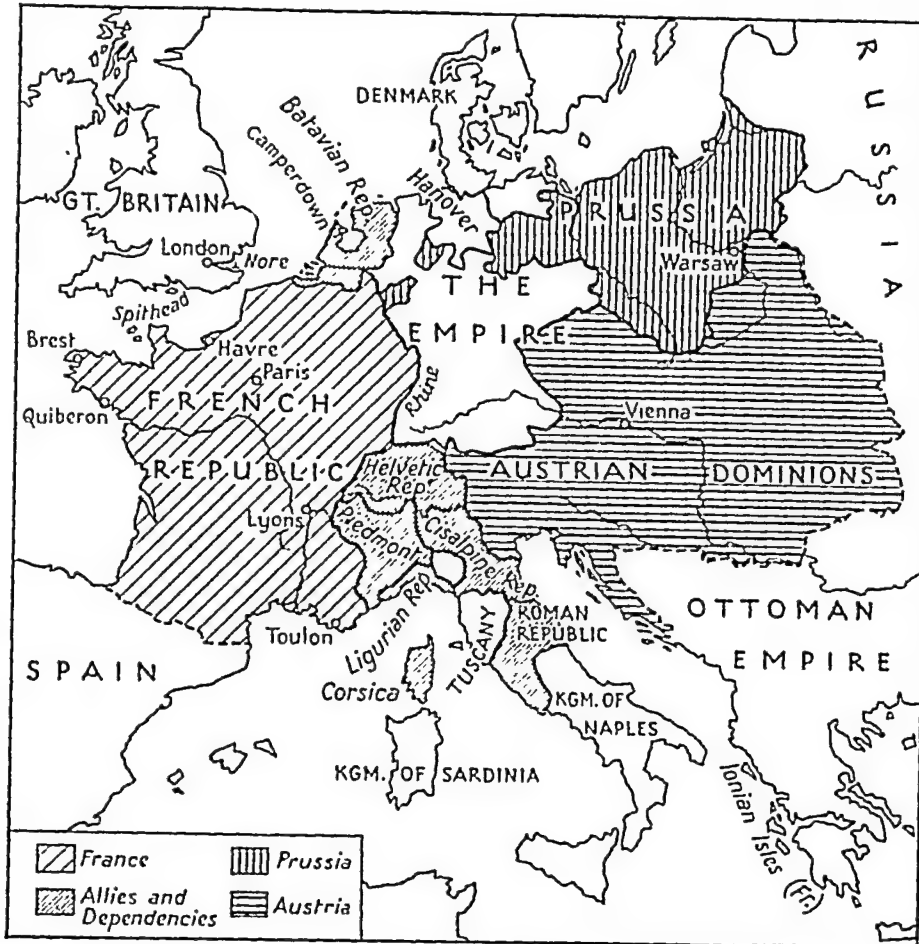
Prussia and  
Spain

Events were thus going badly enough for Britain when a new star appeared on the horizon. Napoleon Bonaparte, a young Corsican soldier, had joined the Republican army shortly after the overthrow of the monarchy. He had taken a prominent part in the siege of Toulon, and later in the quelling of a mob attack in Paris. In 1796 he was put in command of the French 'Army of Italy'. It was in Italy that his astonishing military genius was first made known to the world. Bonaparte first fell on the Sardinians and forced them to make a separate peace (1796). Then, in a series of brilliant campaigns, he beat the Austrians and drove them out of Italy. Bonaparte relied

Bonaparte  
in Italy  
1796-7

<sup>1</sup> The Partitions of Poland, by which that unfortunate country was wiped off the map of Europe, are among the worst instances of barefaced wrongdoing in European history. Poland was weak and defenceless; she was torn asunder by three strong neighbours. It was these very neighbours who were protesting so loudly about the French conquest of Holland and Belgium.

chiefly on the power of sudden attacks, delivered by infantry in column formation, and on the use of light field-guns, which could be moved quickly into action. The Austrian generals



EUROPE IN 1798

Note: 1. The incorporation of Belgium and Western Germany by France. 2. The disappearance of Venice. 3. The absorption of Poland by Austria, Russia, and Prussia.

were no match for him, either in tactics or in the power of leading men to victory. By the beginning of 1797 the Austrians were in full flight across the frontier; Bonaparte chased them into their own country and forced them to sign an armistice.

In the year 1797 Britain was faced with a most serious situation. All her continental allies had either been defeated

or had withdrawn from the war; the French were masters of western Europe. The naval situation was scarcely less serious, for the fleets of France, Spain, and Holland were now ranged against Great Britain. Admiral Sir John Jervis, however, with Nelson as second-in-command, broke the Spanish line at the battle of Cape St. Vincent (February 1797) and scattered the enemy. But scarcely had one danger thus been removed, when our whole naval position in the North Sea was threatened by serious mutinies in the fleet. The grievances of the seamen were real enough: they were badly fed, seldom paid, and kept at their duty by a system of brutal punishments for which discipline is too mild a word. In addition, most of the sailors had been forced into the Navy by the press-gang. The first mutiny occurred at Spithead; the Government, recognizing that some concessions were necessary, eventually accepted most of the men's demands, and order was restored. A more serious situation, however, was created by the mutiny of the North Sea fleet, under Admiral Duncan, which was blockading the Dutch coast. The mutineers seized the ships and sailed back to the Thames Estuary, their head-quarters being at the Nore. Duncan, with two ships left, hoodwinked the enemy by sending signals to an imaginary fleet behind. After an anxious month, the men returned to their duties. Parker, the ringleader, and eighteen others were hanged. Duncan continued the blockade of the Dutch coast, and it was not till October that the enemy fleet emerged. An action took place off Camperdown—an overwhelming victory for the British, nine out of sixteen Dutch ships being captured. The sailors, who had so recently been mutineers, had nobly proved their patriotism, and were pardoned by the Government.

Position in  
1797.  
Britain  
alone

1797.  
Cape St.  
Vincent

Mutinies in  
the Fleet

Camper-  
down

A week after Camperdown, Austria signed the Treaty of Campo Formio (1797) with the French Republic. By this treaty, Belgium and the Rhine frontier were given to France—such gains as she had not received under the greatest of her kings. At the same time the dependent republics which the French had set up in Holland, Switzerland, and North Italy were recognized by Austria. Britain stood alone (1797) against the victorious Republic, which, only four years before, was thought to be on the verge of destruction.

Treaty of  
Campo  
Formio  
1797

In one respect, however, Britain had done well out of the war. Her naval superiority had enabled her to attack the oversea possessions not only of France but of the allies of France. The Dutch had suffered heavily in the loss of Ceylon and the Cape of Good Hope (1795) and of Demerara in South America (1796). The Cape was then chiefly important on account of its position on the route to India, but it afterwards proved a valuable colony in itself. Spain lost Trinidad (1797) and what is now British Honduras; the French lost several islands, of which the most important was St. Lucia. But a great deal of money and thousands of lives were consumed in a useless attempt to conquer the French colony of Haiti on Hispaniola, where a negro rebellion broke out. The rebellion was due, in the first instance, to the influence of the French Revolution on the slaves; it spread to several of the other islands, where, however, it was ultimately quelled. But Haiti remained, and remains, a negro republic.

## 2. *Britain and the Mediterranean*

At the beginning of 1798 the French troops marched into Rome, whence the Pope, Pius VI, fled; a Roman republic was set up. The French were now in command of all north Italy; Spain was their ally; they controlled the western Mediterranean. It merely remained for them to conquer Naples, and to attack the unwieldy Turkish Empire, and the Mediterranean would become a French lake. An attack on Egypt (nominally a Turkish province) was therefore decided on. Bonaparte, who was given the command, already dreamed of annexing the Turkish Empire, and of advancing, from Egypt, to the conquest of India. 'This little Europe', he declared, 'is too small for me.'

Britain wisely decided to challenge the French supremacy in the Mediterranean. But the French Egyptian Expedition, eluding Admiral Nelson, sailed from Toulon to the Nile. On the way the French demanded the surrender of Malta from the Knights of St. John, and left a garrison to occupy the island. Landing in Egypt, Bonaparte beat the Mamelukes<sup>1</sup> at the battle of the Pyramids. While he was celebrating this victory,

<sup>1</sup> The Mamelukes were a military caste (originally Circassian slaves) which dominated Egypt.

news arrived that his fleet was gone. Nelson had destroyed it at the battle of the Nile. Sailing into Aboukir Bay (in one of the mouths of the Nile) where the French fleet lay at anchor, Nelson attacked with his terrible gun-fire at close quarters. Thirteen ships were taken or sunk; only four escaped (August 1798).

Battle of  
the Nile  
August  
1798

After this it was evident that Bonaparte would have to abandon the dream of a French Mediterranean, which must obviously depend upon sea-power. But he still had his army, with which to invade other parts of the Turkish Empire. He marched into Palestine, expecting to meet with little resistance, but was held up by the Turkish defence of Acre (1799). The Turks were assisted in their defence by part of the British fleet, under Sir Sidney Smith, one of Nelson's captains. Foiled at Acre, Bonaparte had to return to Egypt. By this time, news from Europe decided him to desert his army and return home. Sailing secretly with a few companions, he eluded the British fleet, and landed safely in France (1799).

Siege of  
Acre, 1799

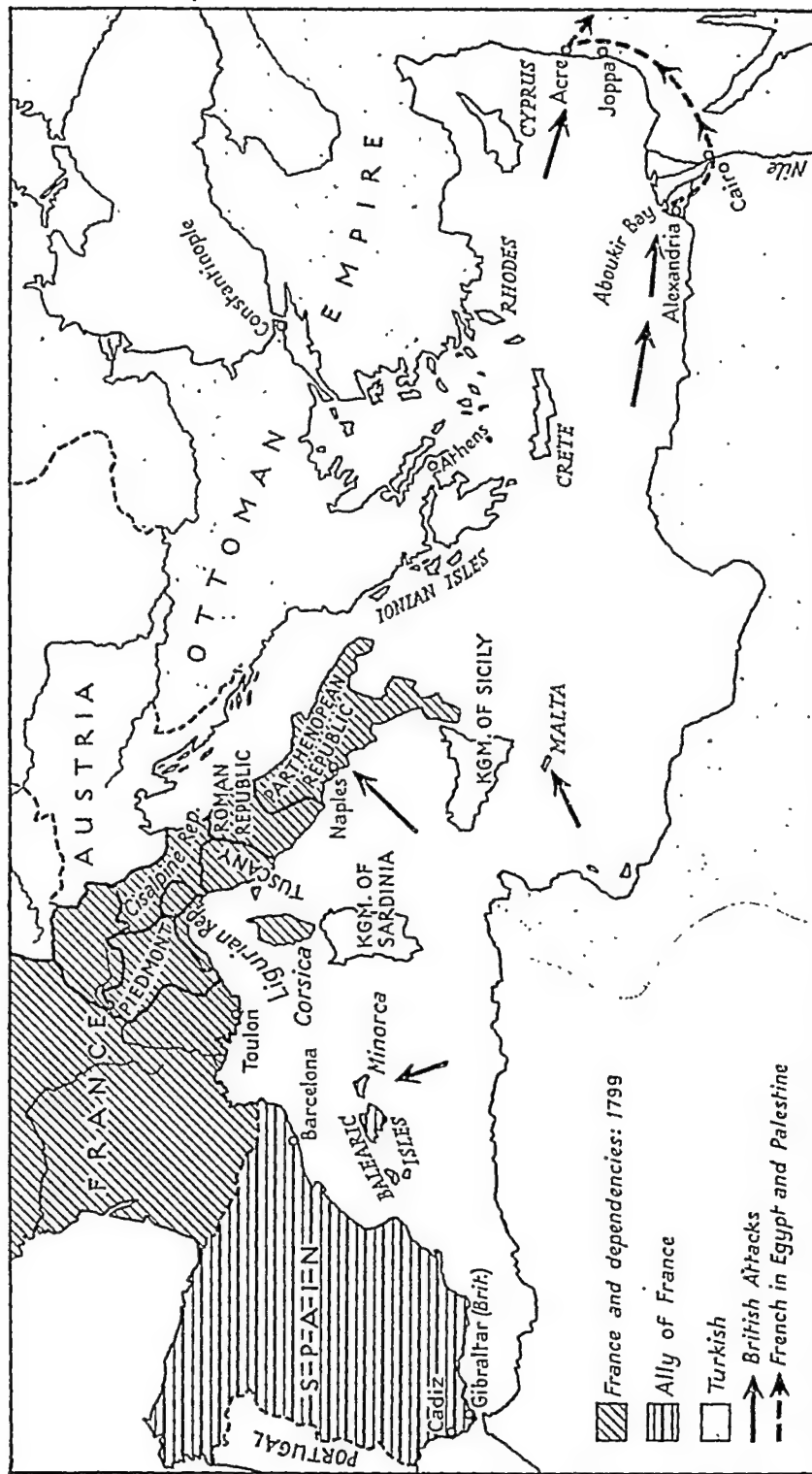
A Second Coalition was now in being, consisting of Britain, Austria, Russia, and Turkey. An Austro-Russian army under Suvoroff, invaded northern Italy and swept out the French. Then it forced its way through the Alpine passes into Switzerland, and was successful until September, when Masséna defeated Suvoroff at Zurich. In Naples, earlier in the year, the French had set up a republican government, and there was now further fighting between the revolutionaries and the adherents of the King of Naples. Finally, the republicans of Naples surrendered to Cardinal Ruffo, on the promise that their lives should be spared. Just as this treaty was signed, Admiral Nelson appeared in the Bay of Naples, with the exiled Neapolitan king on board. The king—Ferdinand IV—repudiated the treaty, and, with Nelson's help, proceeded to crush the rebels in a series of cruel executions and imprisonments. The government of Ferdinand IV was, in all probability, the worst in Europe. It is sad to reflect that it was Nelson who helped to consign hundreds of brave men to the living death of a Neapolitan prison.<sup>1</sup>

Second  
Coalition  
1799

Naples

Nelson at  
Naples

<sup>1</sup> 'The part borne by Nelson in this work of death has left a stain on his glory which time cannot efface. The name which to ourselves



THE MEDITERRANEAN, 1798-1800



Meanwhile Bonaparte was received with tremendous enthusiasm in France. He decided that the moment had arrived to assume complete control. He therefore overthrew the government—the Directory—by force (*Coup d'état*, November 1799) and set up a new government of three consuls, with himself as First Consul. From the moment when he became First Consul, Bonaparte was the absolute ruler of France, a position which he held for fifteen years. Soon he raised a new army, full of enthusiasm, and ready to follow him to victory. He did not disappoint his soldiers; at the battle of Marengo (near Genoa) the Austrians were again defeated. Shortly after this, Russia and Austria made peace; Britain once more stood alone (1800 as in 1797).

*Coup d'état*  
of 1799

Marengo  
1800

The British, however, scored two important successes. They took Malta (1800), which has ever since been a British possession, and they sent an army to Egypt (1801) under Sir Ralph Abercrombie which procured the surrender of the French army which Bonaparte had left behind. The position, in 1800, was thus fairly even: Britain was completely victorious at sea, and she had taken most of the Dutch and a great many of the French and Spanish islands in all parts of the world. In the Mediterranean, the French had been completely foiled; they had been checked at Naples, at Malta, at Acre, and in Egypt.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand the Second Coalition was no more, and the French were once more masters of North Italy; nor could any limits be set to their further probable advance on land.

British take  
Malta, 1800

France and  
Britain in  
1800

Interest now shifted from the Mediterranean to the Baltic. The Tsar of Russia, Paul I, revived the Armed Neutrality of the North which had been formed during the War of American Independence (1780) to contest the British claim to search neutral shipping. Russia, Sweden, and Denmark were thus ranged in hostility to Britain. The British Government dispatched Admiral Sir Hyde Parker, with Nelson as second-in-command, to the Baltic to attack the Danes. Nelson

Armed  
Neutrality  
of the  
North, 1801

represents everything that is most gallant, most faithful, most tender, recalls on the Mediterranean coast the abettor of a perfidious cruelty' (Fyffe, *Modern Europe*, ii).

<sup>1</sup> 'Had I been master of the sea', once remarked Napoleon, 'I should have been lord also of the Orient.'

First Battle  
of Copen-  
hagen, 1801

engaged the Danish fleet, and disregarded Parker's signal to withdraw. "Do you know what's shown on board the Commander-in-Chief?" asked Nelson . . . "Why, to leave off action!" "Leave off action!" he repeated, and then added, with a shrug, "Now damn me if I do!" He then observed to Captain Foley, "You know, Foley, I have only one eye—I have a right to be blind sometimes." And then, with an archness peculiar to his character, putting the glass to his blind eye, he exclaimed: "I really do not see the signal!"<sup>1</sup> The bombardment lasted four hours, after which the Danes surrendered. Meanwhile a court tragedy changed the policy of Russia, the leader of the Armed Neutrality. The mad Tsar, Paul I, was murdered (1801); his son and successor, Alexander I, at once came to terms with Britain, and the Armed Neutrality collapsed.

Pitt  
resigns  
1801

Shortly after these events, Pitt resigned the premiership for reasons unconnected with the conduct of the war. George III had forced him to break his promise to the Irish Catholics,<sup>2</sup> and Pitt did not consider it honourable to remain in office. On his resignation (1801) Addington, formerly Speaker, was made Prime Minister; Pitt remained out of office for three years.

Addington  
Govern-  
ment  
1801-4

Peace of  
Amiens  
1802

Addington's Government decided to make peace with France. The negotiations lasted some months, but, after much haggling, peace was made at Amiens (1802), Britain agreeing to restore some of her colonial conquests. But there could be no lasting peace as long as Bonaparte was at the head of affairs in France. His restless mind was already turning to ambitious schemes in Germany and beyond.

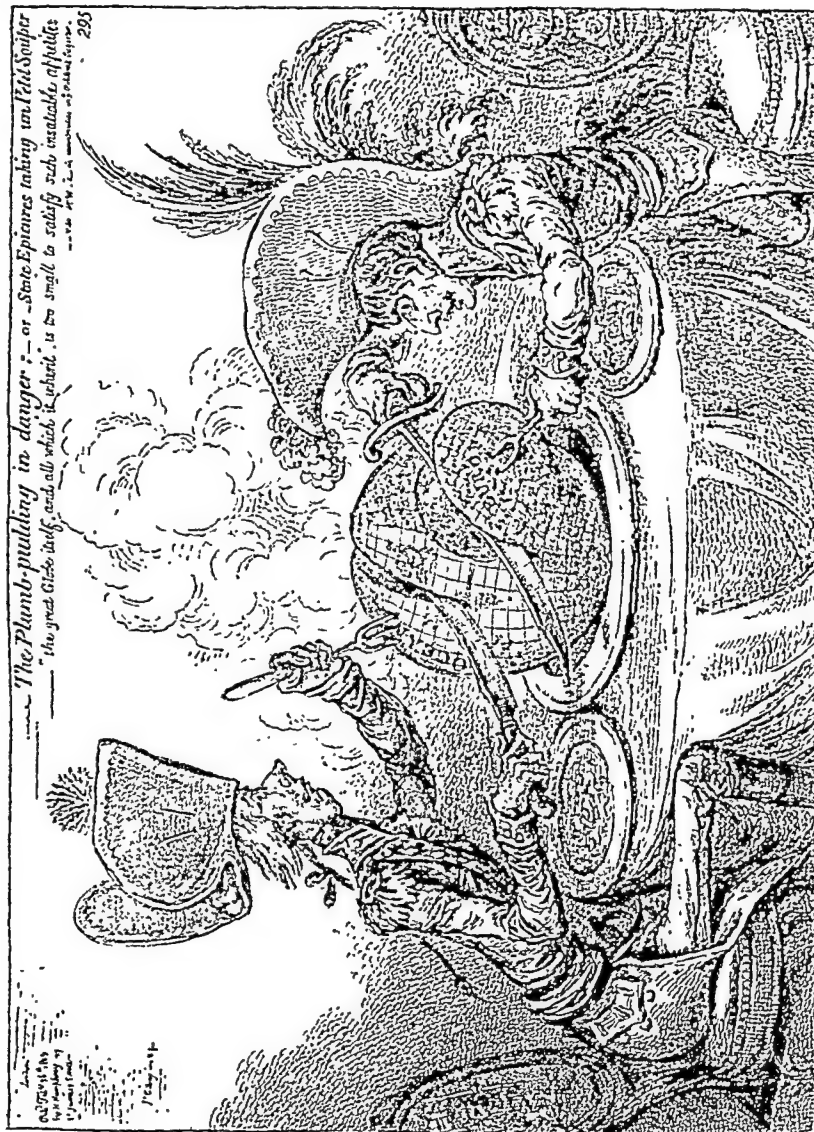
### 3. *Land-power versus Sea-power*

The peace signed at Amiens lasted only a year, for it soon became obvious that Bonaparte was preparing for further conquests. Britain, suspicious of his intentions, refused to give up Malta; by March 1803 war was again declared. As she prepared for a second and even more terrible struggle, Britain was more united as a nation than ten years previously. Those who had formerly held that the French Revolution heralded the

War  
renewed  
1803

<sup>1</sup> See the story in Southey's *Life of Nelson*.

<sup>2</sup> See next Chapter.



A CARTOON OF 1805 BY GILLRAY  
 Pitt holds the sea for England, while Napoleon helps himself to Europe.

dawn of European liberty, were now convinced that that very liberty was in danger from the ambitions of the First Consul. This feeling was expressed in Wordsworth's noble sonnet (1803) on the precious heritage of British freedom:

We must be free or die, who speak the tongue  
That Shakespeare spoke; the faith and morals hold  
Which Milton held.

The times were too serious to permit of Britain's first statesman living in retirement; early in 1804 Pitt was recalled to office. A month later Bonaparte crowned himself emperor as Napoleon I; he also converted the French conquests in Lombardy into the Kingdom of Italy, with himself as king. Having made these arrangements, he turned to the agreeable task of crushing Britain, as a preliminary to further European conquests. He saw that France, to achieve European supremacy, must first overcome 'these active islanders', as he called the British. Pitt endeavoured to counter his schemes by forming the Third Coalition—Britain, Austria, and Russia (1805).

During 1804 and 1805, Napoleon collected a large army at Boulogne for the purpose of invading England. He ordered the construction of a fleet of flat-bottomed boats for the transport of the soldiers. It merely remained for the French navy to clear the Channel of English ships, and the rest—Napoleon thought—would be comparatively easy. A certain amount of panic was created in England by these preparations,<sup>1</sup> especially as the camp at Boulogne could be seen through a telescope. There, on the white cliffs of France, were assembled the troops sworn to destroy English liberty; there, no doubt, paced the dreadful figure of 'Boney', the Corsican ogre—the terrible little man whose soldiers always marched to victory. The British Navy, however, felt confident of its strength. Lord St. Vincent (Admiral Jervis) said in the Upper House: 'I do not say, my lords, that the French cannot come. I only say, they cannot come *by sea*.'

In the early months of 1805 the French carried out the preliminaries to the plan for the invasion of England. Napoleon

<sup>1</sup> See Thomas Hardy's novel, *The Trumpet Major*, for a description of the south coast of England during these years.

ordered the various French and Spanish fleets—at Toulon, Cadiz, Corunna, Rochefort, and Brest—to elude the British blockade and sail for a secret rendezvous—Martinique.<sup>1</sup> The fleets from Toulon, Rochefort, and Cadiz all ran through the British blockade and sailed for the West Indies. Nelson, on guard in the Mediterranean and so far ignorant of their intentions, followed them (May 1805). When he reached Martinique, he guessed that the West Indies was merely a rendezvous, and that the French intended to attack England itself. He therefore sent a fast brig ahead to warn Lord Barham at the Admiralty, while he himself with the rest of the fleet some days later followed the enemy's armada back across the Atlantic. Lord Barham sent Calder to meet Villeneuve, and an indecisive action was fought off Cape Finisterre. Villeneuve, the French admiral, then put in at Corunna and later succeeded in reaching Cadiz, thus raising his fleet from 18 to 33 vessels. Meanwhile Napoleon heard that the Austrians were mobilizing; he therefore broke up his camp at Boulogne, and transferred his 'Army of England' to Germany (August 1805).

The Plan of  
Invasion

The plan  
abandoned  
August  
1805

The last three months of 1805 witnessed the two most spectacular victories of the whole war on sea and land respectively—Trafalgar and Austerlitz. While Napoleon was pursuing his victorious way across Germany, he ordered his admiral, Villeneuve, to come out and fight. The result was the battle of Trafalgar<sup>2</sup> (21 October 1805), when Nelson swept on the combined fleets of France and Spain, and vanquished them. Twenty out of the thirty-three enemy battleships were captured or sunk; and Nelson died on board the *Victory*, happy in the knowledge that he was the saviour of his country. In the naval war Trafalgar was decisive; Napoleon was never able to reverse the verdict of that October day, and for the remaining ten years of the war the power of the British Navy was not seriously challenged. At the Guildhall banquet that November

Trafalgar  
21 October  
1805

Death of  
Nelson

<sup>1</sup> The French admirals were forbidden to open their sailing orders, telling them their destination, until they were well out to sea.

<sup>2</sup> Trafalgar was the last great victory won with sailing ships—those beautiful vessels which swept the seas from the Age of Drake to the Age of Nelson. Sailing vessels fought the battle of Navarino (1827), but steam ships took part in the American Civil War (1861-5).

the Prime Minister paid tribute to England's dead hero. Referring to the prestige which the fleet had won, he said: 'England has saved herself by her exertions; she will, I trust, save Europe by her example.'

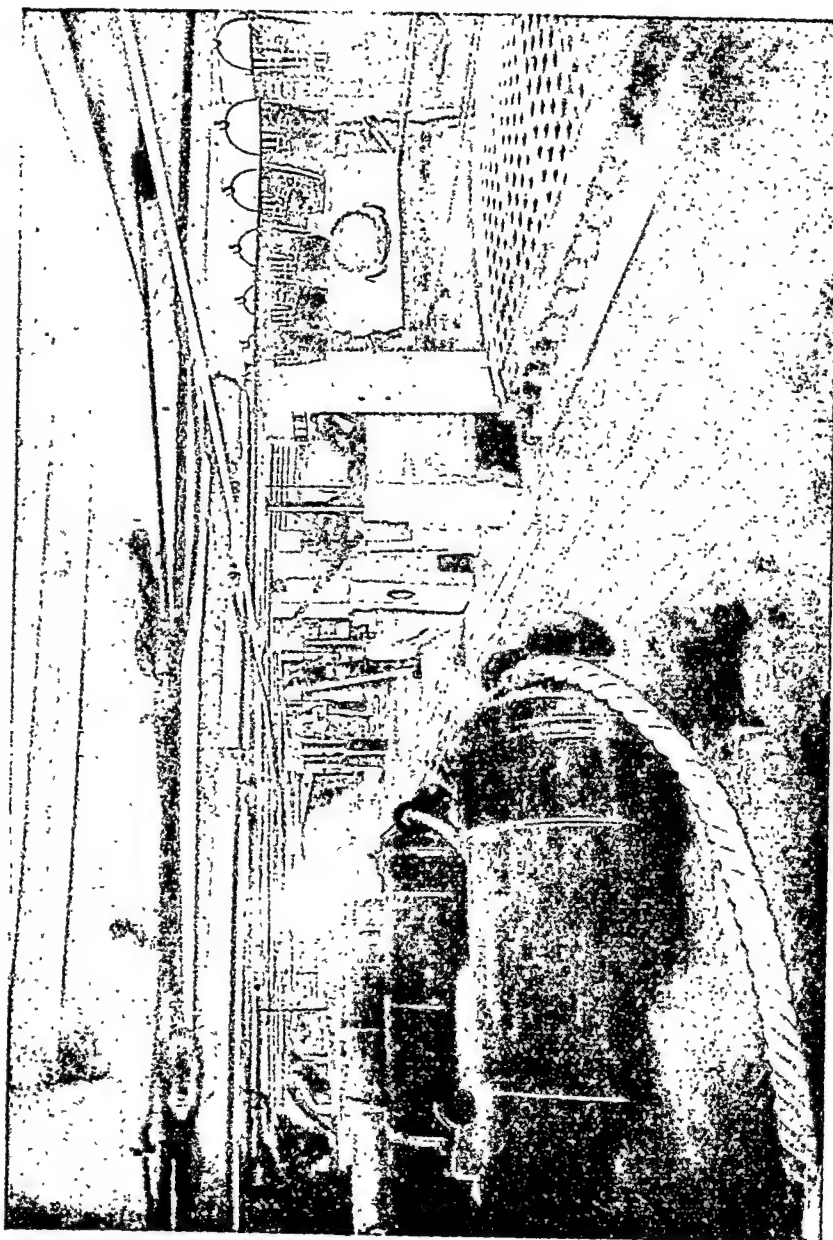
But, even as he spoke, the armies of the relentless emperor were hacking their way across Europe. One Austrian army was surrounded at Ulm, and forced to surrender. Napoleon entered Vienna. Then, in December, he met the allied armies of Austria and Russia, and annihilated them at Austerlitz. His great victory—as overwhelming as Nelson's though not so lasting in its effects—forced Austria into a humiliating peace and left Napoleon a free hand in Germany. The news of Austerlitz was brought to London, where a sick and ageing man struggled with a burden too hard for him to bear. Pitt was studying a map of Europe when he heard the fatal news. 'Roll up that map,' he said,<sup>1</sup> adding with prophetic insight, 'it will not be wanted these ten years.' The blow was too much for Pitt's ebbing strength, and he quickly sank to his grave. 'My country, how I leave my country!' were his last words (January 1806).

His death opened the way for his great rival to enter the Cabinet; for the times were too serious to permit a half-crazy king to pursue any further his antipathy to Mr. Fox. A Coalition Ministry was formed—the Ministry of All the Talents, it was called—in which Fox held the post of Foreign Secretary for the few months left to him of life. It was this ministry which has the eternal credit of passing the Act making the slave trade illegal<sup>2</sup> (1807). Fox died (September 1806) just before the Act was passed, but he helped in its introduction.

Meanwhile, the wisdom of Pitt's remark about the map of Europe was becoming clear. Napoleon expelled the Bourbon king, Ferdinand, from Naples, and set up his own brother Joseph Bonaparte in his stead. His brother Louis became King of Holland. In Germany, after Austerlitz, Napoleon

<sup>1</sup> There is some doubt whether Pitt actually made this remark. Austerlitz was not the only blow; another was the news that the Prussians had come to terms with Napoleon and accepted the bribe he offered them—Hanover.

<sup>2</sup> See Chapter XXXIX.



NELSON'S NAVY  
The lower gun-deck of the *Victory* to-day, in Portsmouth dockyard.



worked his will. French influence was so supreme that all western Germany was formed into the 'Confederation of the Rhine' under French tutelage. In August 1806, Napoleon notified the German Diet that he no longer recognized the existence of the Holy Roman Empire, which had endured for a thousand years. The Emperor resigned his ancient title, and assumed that of Emperor of Austria, which his family retained till 1918. Apart from Austria and Prussia, Germany lay at the feet of Napoleon. Later in the same year, 1806, Napoleon picked a quarrel with Prussia, and inflicted on her the crushing defeat of Jena. He then entered yet another foreign capital—Berlin—and from there issued the Berlin Decree, aimed at Britain.

End of the  
Holy  
Roman  
Empire  
1806

Jena, 1806

Berlin  
Decree  
1806

Treaty of  
Tilsit, 1807

The Conti-  
nental  
System

By this Berlin Decree Napoleon declared the British Isles to be in a state of blockade, and forbade all commerce between them and France, or the states allied with France. Next year Napoleon made an alliance with the Tsar<sup>1</sup> (Treaty of Tilsit, 1807), who agreed to enforce the 'Continental System'—the name given to Napoleon's plan to ruin British commerce and 'cut off supplies to the stomach' of his enemy. 'I have every reason to hope', wrote Napoleon, 'that this measure will deal a deadly blow to England.' He *had* some reason for his hope; for he could control the ports of France, Germany, Italy, Spain, and Holland, and he had Russia for an ally. The British Government replied by their Orders in Council (1807). A counter-blockade was declared on the ports of France and her allies, and neutrals were forbidden to trade with Napoleon and his allies. Thus was all Europe involved in the fight to the death between Britain and Napoleon. The British working-class suffered from the high price of bread. But even Napoleon could not manage without British goods, and his own envoy—in spite of the Berlin Decree—smuggled British coats, caps, and shoes for the French army.

<sup>1</sup> The Russians had fought a drawn battle with the French at Eylau, and then were defeated at Friedland. Alexander was by this time, disgusted by the collapse of the Coalition, and admired the astonishing feats of Napoleon. Like all the Romanovs, Alexander was somewhat unbalanced: so now he determined to change right round, and make friends with Napoleon.



Early in 1807 the Coalition ministry in Britain fell; the Tories came in and stayed in for twenty-three years (1807-30). First came a short but important ministry under the Duke of Portland (1807-9). This ministry included those two remarkable men—and inveterate enemies—George Canning and Lord Castlereagh.<sup>1</sup> Canning, as Foreign Secretary, received secret information that Napoleon and the Tsar were planning attacks on neutral countries, such as Denmark and Portugal. In particular he learned that Napoleon intended to seize the Danish fleet. Acting with great promptitude, Canning sent Admiral Gambier to the Sound to demand the immediate surrender of the Danish fleet. The Danes naturally refused so outrageous a request, but Gambier bombarded Copenhagen—Second Battle of Copenhagen, 1807—that unfortunate city—till they gave way. He returned home with the Danish fleet as a prize. Continental countries were rightly indignant at this incident, which the British Government defended on the plea that they had merely forestalled the French.

That all Europe must be involved in the struggle between the two great antagonists—the land-monster and the sea-monster—was soon made plain. In the same year that Britain seized the Danish fleet, Napoleon struck at Portugal, on the ground that the Portuguese were trading with Britain. General Junot's army overran Portugal; it arrived at Lisbon just too late to capture the King of Portugal and his family, who sailed away to Brazil on board a British ship which Canning had sent to the Tagus (1807). French invade Portugal 1807

Napoleon now controlled Europe from Lisbon to Moscow. His enemies, on the other hand, controlled the seas. In the Mediterranean the British held Gibraltar and Malta, and maintained the exiled kings of Sardinia and Sicily<sup>2</sup> on the island parts of their dominions. In the outer world, the French, Dutch, and Spanish islands had again been seized since the breach of the Peace of Amiens; Cape Colony was permanently occupied (1806). It remained to be seen whether Napoleon could destroy Britain

<sup>1</sup> Canning was Foreign Secretary; Castlereagh Secretary-at-War.

<sup>2</sup> The King of Sardinia had lost Piedmont, and the King of the Two Sicilies had lost Naples, both of which were in the hands of the French.

through his Continental System or whether that very system—with its war on sugar and cotton, tea and coffee—would raise up enemies against him.

#### 4. *The Overthrow of Napoleon*

The downfall of Napoleon was brought about by the Peninsular War and the rising of the nations in other parts of Europe. It will be convenient to follow the war in Spain to its conclusion, before dealing briefly with events elsewhere.

In 1808 Napoleon decided to overthrow the Bourbon monarchy of Spain. By a particularly mean trick—even for him—he lured the Spanish royal family into his power, and forced the king, Charles IV, to abdicate in favour of his son Ferdinand. He then insisted on Ferdinand's abdication, and gave the crown to his own brother, Joseph Bonaparte. The result of these manoeuvres was not at all what he expected. For fifteen years the French had been invading the territories of their neighbours, and overthrowing, with comparative ease, the governments opposed to them. In dealing with countries like Germany and Italy, which were divided up into small states under corrupt governments, there had been little difficulty. But Spain was a nation, not a collection of small states. Its government, it is true, was as bad as any in Europe, but the Spaniards were a proud people, ready to defend their independence. Moreover, there was virtually no sympathy, such as there was in other countries which French armies entered, for French liberal doctrines. For the first time in the war, the French encountered a truly national resistance. It was found necessary to garrison every Spanish town of any size, in order to keep the government of King Joseph in being.

It was at this point that the British Government made an important decision. So far our effort in the war had been almost entirely naval and colonial; now it was decided to embark on a military effort on a much larger scale. Canning and Castlereagh, who agreed in little else, agreed to this. A Spanish alliance was welcomed by English manufacturers, eager to sell their steel and cotton goods to the Spanish colonies in America. From the military point of view, the alliance proved to be decisive: English persistence kept alive the

Napoleon  
attacks  
Spain, 1808

The  
Spanish  
National  
Rising

✓  
The Penin-  
sular War  
1809-13

Spanish revolt, and it was the 'Spanish ulcer', as Napoleon confessed, which ruined him.

An army of 30,000 men was sent to Portugal under a young general called Sir Arthur Wellesley, who had already distinguished himself in India.<sup>1</sup> Wellesley won the battle of Vimiero, <sup>Vimiero 1808</sup> and was then superseded by superior officers arriving from England. Left to himself, Wellesley would probably have brought about the surrender of Junot's army; as it was, the French, by the Convention of Cintra (1808), were allowed to evacuate Portugal without further loss. Napoleon himself now came to Spain; he had an army of 250,000 to hold down the country. Sir John Moore, the new British commander, advanced into Spain, and so drew off a large proportion of the French army, and certainly saved Lisbon. Napoleon sent Marshal Soult to chase the English to the north of Spain. Moore was killed at Corunna—they 'buried him darkly at dead of night'—but his army safely embarked on a British fleet at <sup>The Retreat to Corunna 1809</sup> that port (1809). Later in the year, Napoleon was obliged to return to Germany to fight the Austrians. He never recrossed the Pyrenees. Spain he left to his marshals.

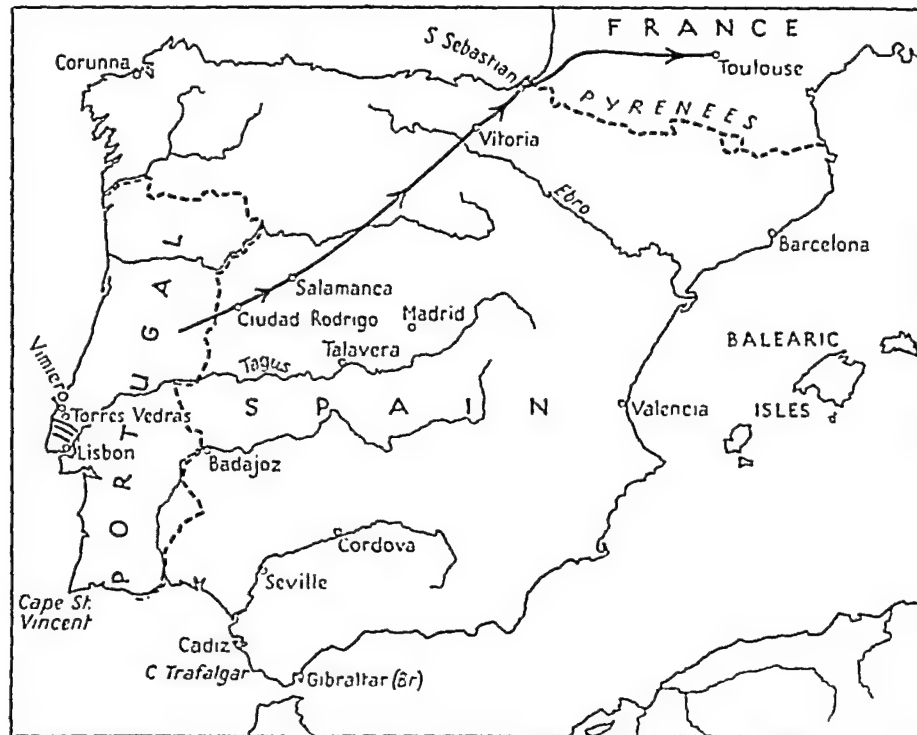
Sir Arthur Wellesley was once again given the command in <sup>Wellesley in Portugal</sup> Portugal. In the campaign of 1809, he advanced into Spain and won the battle of Talavera, but was again forced to retreat to Lisbon. Marshal Masséna now took the offensive with the object of driving the 'English leopard' into the sea. But Wellington's<sup>2</sup> tactics in 1810 foiled him. The English commander constructed lines of trenches across the peninsula on which Lisbon stands. These lines, known as the lines of Torres <sup>Torres Vedras 1810-11</sup> Vedras, were so well fortified that Masséna found it impossible to attack them. Besides this, Wellington had devastated the country around, so that Masséna soon found his army starving. Wellington, on the other hand, was in an impregnable position behind the lines, with Lisbon as a base; and Lisbon was supplied from the sea. Masséna was forced to retreat with heavy losses (1811); and the French did not enter Portugal again.

These tactics wore down the French, who were further

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter XXXIV.

<sup>2</sup> Wellesley was made a peer in 1809, taking the title of Lord Wellington. He was made a duke in 1814.

hampered by their long lines of communication—500 miles from Portugal to the Pyrenees. The Spaniards waged a guerilla warfare all the time, attacking French columns on the march and then retiring to their mountains. Napoleon, during the Peninsular War, had to wage two other major campaigns, one



SPAIN AND PORTUGAL. THE PENINSULAR WAR

against Austria (1809) and one against Russia (1812). This made it difficult for him to relieve his harassed troops in the Peninsula. Above all, the supremacy of the British at sea secured our connexion with Lisbon, on which the whole of Wellington's schemes depended.

The Advance into Spain 1812 In 1812—the year of Napoleon's fatal expedition to Moscow—Wellington felt strong enough to advance into Spain. He began by storming the two fortresses of Badajoz and Ciudad Rodrigo, which commanded the two main roads from Portugal into Spain. Then he advanced as far as Salamanca, where he won a brilliant victory, and entered Madrid, whence Joseph Bonaparte fled. In spite of these successes, the British commander

thought it well to retire once more to Portugal for the winter. But in 1813 he reaped his reward. Starting from Portugal in May, he crossed the Pyrenees within forty days, driving the French before him. The last considerable action in Spain was fought at Vitoria, where King Joseph lost all his artillery and stores; Wellington's campaign of 1814 began in the south of France. But by that time Napoleon was fighting with his back to the wall.

Vitoria  
1813

We must now turn to glance at the rest of Europe during the time of the Peninsular War. In 1809 the British government sent an expedition under Lord Chatham (Pitt's brother) to the island of Walcheren, for the purpose of attacking Antwerp. The expedition was a dismal failure, and brought about the fall of the Government. Canning quarrelled with Castlereagh over Walcheren, and the two ministers fought a duel; both resigned from the Cabinet. A new ministry was formed under Spencer Perceval (1809-12), who was assassinated three years later by a lunatic in the precincts of the House of Commons.

Walcheren  
Expedition  
1809

Perceval  
Ministry  
1809-12

Napoleon, meanwhile, had considerable difficulties with his enormous empire, the populations of which were feeling keenly the loss of British trade. He had to depose his brother Louis, King of Holland, because he refused to put the Continental System into force (1810). In order to control the continental ports, Napoleon now annexed to France not only Holland, but the whole German coast up to the Elbe.<sup>1</sup> Soon after this the Tsar followed King Louis' example, and broke with Napoleon. The French Emperor therefore embarked on his great Russian campaign (1812), which ended in one of the most appalling disasters in military history. The Russians set fire to Moscow, and Napoleon had to retreat across the frozen plains back to Germany; he lost more than five-sixths of his army of 600,000 men.

Retreat  
from  
Moscow  
1812

In 1812 Lord Liverpool became Prime Minister in England, and Lord Castlereagh Foreign Secretary (1812-22) and leader of the House of Commons.<sup>2</sup> Castlereagh was the most

Liverpool  
Ministry  
1812-27

<sup>1</sup> He even annexed a narrow strip in the south of Denmark, which brought French territory to the Baltic.

<sup>2</sup> Lord Castlereagh was not a member of the British peerage; his *Irish* peerage did not entitle him to sit in the House of Lords.

important figure in British politics for the next ten years. He arranged the Fourth Coalition (1813)—Britain, Russia, and Prussia, and later Austria—which was destined to bring Napoleon to his knees. The revival of Prussia was followed by

Castlereagh.  
Fourth  
Coalition  
1813



EUROPE UNDER NAPOLEON, 1811

a real national awakening in Germany, and the year 1813 witnessed the War of Liberation in that country. All the German states threw off their allegiance to Napoleon, who had now to fight for his empire. He won another battle at Dresden, but at Leipzig—the 'Battle of the Nations'—he was decisively defeated (1813). Even then Napoleon might have secured fair terms—he was offered the Rhine frontier. But he obstinately refused.

Leipzig  
1813

By 1814, as we have seen, Wellington was over the Pyrenees; he defeated the French at Toulouse. At the same time the

Allies  
invade  
France

allies<sup>1</sup>—Russians, Germans, and Austrians—advanced into France, and the French, for the first time for twenty years, had to defend their own country. Napoleon fell back towards Paris, but the weight of numbers was too strong for him. Finally he signed his abdication at Fontainebleau (1814). He was taken to the island of Elba, and the victorious allies set about the difficult business of settling the frontiers of Europe.

Napoleon  
at Elba  
1814

The defeat of Napoleon was due, in the first place, to the fact that he could never secure command of the sea, and so could never defeat Britain. In the second place, it was due to the failure of his Continental System to achieve its designed end: introduced in order to cripple Britain, it ended by turning Napoleon's allies into enemies and arousing everywhere the spirit of national resistance. First Spain, then Holland, then Russia, then Germany—all these countries had revolted against the Napoleonic system. The help given at the critical moment by England to Spain, where the first national rising occurred, was the turning-point. The result was secured by the persistence of the British effort and the revival of our allies.

Reasons for  
Napoleon's  
Fall

### 5. *Waterloo and Vienna*

The Congress of Vienna, which met to make a general settlement of Europe after the war, began its labours in 1814. Prussia, backed by Russia, fell into controversy with Austria, backed by Britain<sup>2</sup>—and more than once it seemed that war might break out between the former allies over Polish and Saxon territory.

The Con-  
gress of  
Vienna  
1814-15

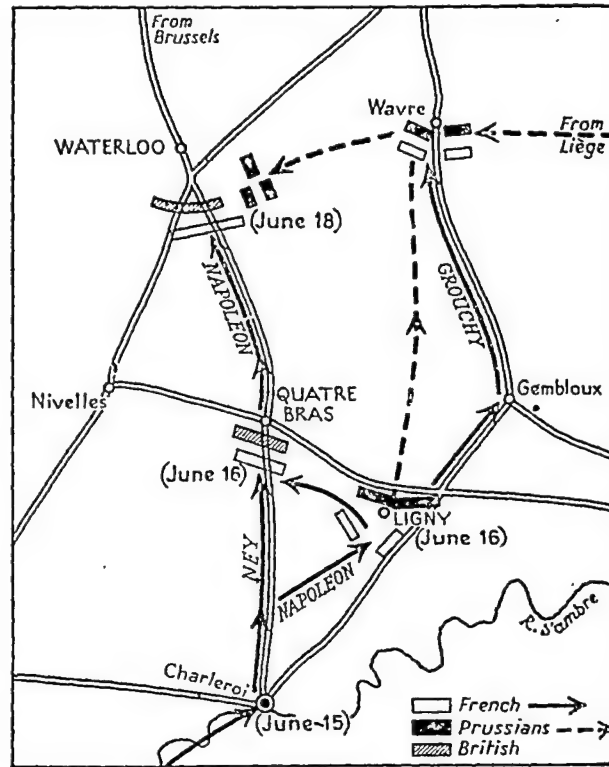
The Bourbon monarchy was restored in France, with Louis

<sup>1</sup> It was now that the allies—Austria, Russia, Prussia, and Great Britain—signed the Treaty of Chaumont (March 1814) agreeing to unite their forces for the overthrow of Napoleon and to make an alliance for twenty years to guarantee the peace of Europe. This treaty led to the Quadruple Alliance and to the Congress system after 1815. (See Chap. XXXVI.)

<sup>2</sup> After the downfall of Napoleon and the restoration of the Bourbons, the French government claimed a share in the deliberations at Vienna. Talleyrand, the astute French diplomat, held the balance between the contending Powers. In January 1815, France, Austria, and Britain even went so far as to sign a defensive alliance against Prussia and Russia!

XVIII, a brother of Louis XVI, as king. But while the diplomats quarrelled at Vienna, and while the French people tried the doubtful experiment of a Bourbon restoration, Napoleon intervened. He escaped from Elba and landed in France. The soldiers sent to arrest him joined him instead and Louis XVIII

Napoleon  
escapes  
February  
1815



THE WATERLOO CAMPAIGN

fled from Paris. A few days later the Emperor was back in the Tuileries.

The Hundred Days (March-June) Napoleon's restoration—his Hundred Days—was an anxious time for the allies; the nightmare of Napoleonic conquest once more loomed over Europe. The war against France was renewed; Britain declined to make peace as long as Napoleon remained on the throne. The command of the main allied army, chiefly British and German, was given to the Duke of Wellington.

The Waterloo Campaign This army assembled in Belgium; Brussels was the Duke's head-quarters. In June 1815 Napoleon suddenly brought his forces up to Charleroi, on the Sambre, about 35 miles south of



Brussels. On 16 June the emperor divided his army into two parts, sending Ney to attack the British at Quatre-Bras, on the Brussels-Charleroi road, while he himself led the attack on the Prussians at Ligny (see map). The battle of Ligny was Napoleon's last victory; he drove the Prussians back, and imagined that they were knocked out of the campaign. On 17 June, Napoleon joined Ney on the Brussels road. The next morning he began the attack on Wellington, who awaited him in front of the village of Waterloo. The allied army numbered 67,000, of whom 24,000 were British; the French had 72,000. The battle, which lasted all day, began by an attack on the British positions at farms called Hougomont and La Haye Sainte. The latter position was taken by the late afternoon, but by that time the Prussians were coming on to the field. Blücher, the Prussian commander, had retired northwards after the battle of Ligny. The night of 17 June he lay at Wavre, 13 miles east of Waterloo. He sent a message promising to come to Wellington's aid, and he fulfilled his promise. Wellington was hard pressed when the Prussians came up, but the arrival of fresh troops turned the scale. About 7 o'clock Napoleon sent forward the Imperial Guard; then he launched his last cavalry reserve. When he knew that Napoleon had put forth his final effort, Wellington ordered the whole British line to advance. The French were routed; the battle was over. 'It has been a damned nice thing,' remarked the Duke afterwards, 'the nearest thing you ever saw in your life.' Much credit was due to Wellington and to his staff—who suffered heavily. Wellington himself was always on the spot at the critical moment, directing the course of action, regardless of personal danger.

Quatre-Bras  
and Ligny  
16 June

Waterloo  
18 June  
1815

After Waterloo Napoleon abdicated a second time, and surrendered to the British. He was taken to the little isolated island of St. Helena in the Atlantic, where he died six years later. Napoleon's unquenchable passion for war and restless personal ambition both inflicted untold harm and suffering on millions of innocent people over a long period of years. His career, nevertheless, was not entirely mischievous: his civil reforms in France itself were permanent and all to the good, while his conquests of Italy and Germany swept away some of

St. Helena

the ancient petty governments in those countries and prepared the way for their great advance in the nineteenth century.

The prestige of Britain had never stood higher than in the year of Waterloo. The long duration of the British effort in the war, far surpassing that of her allies, the fame of her great general, the invincibility of her Navy—all combined to enhance the majesty of Britain in the eyes of Europe. The British army, thanks to Wellington's command, had renewed the great traditions of the Marlburian era. Wellington, who was a realist, described his men as 'the scum of the earth, enlisted for drink'; but the iron discipline of the Army—of which the military floggings were a degrading feature—moulded this unpromising material into fine soldiers. The British soldiers who pushed Napoleon's veterans across the Pyrenees were undoubtedly men of a hard and brutal type. But they were not permitted to live entirely on plunder, like the French, nor were they so brutal as the Prussian army of occupation in France, whose behaviour disgusted Wellington.

Castlereagh  
at Vienna

Treatment  
of France

The services of Castlereagh and Wellington, Britain's representatives at the Congress of Vienna, were invaluable. It was due to them that the allies, particularly Prussia, were prevented from taking revenge on France for the misdeeds of Napoleon. Wellington scorned revenge; and Britain has seldom been represented abroad by a greater statesman than Lord Castlereagh, though his merits were not recognized by the mass of his countrymen. Castlereagh prevented the possibility of a war of revenge by France; he saw that the defeated nation was fairly treated. France was reduced to the limits of her 1791 frontiers and had to pay an indemnity; she lost no territory that had been held by the Bourbons. Britain restored most of the French colonies.

In other respects the Congress was not so happy in its decisions. Poland was not freed, but re-divided among her preying neighbours. The rulers of the petty Italian states, whom the French Revolution had overthrown, were restored to misgovern their dominions; it took two more revolutions (1848 and 1860) to get rid of them. The Bourbon family was restored on the thrones of France, Spain, and Naples; Louis XVIII granted a charter to his people, but the other restora-

tions meant civil war, followed by a long period of misrule. Another defect of the Vienna Settlement was the arbitrary method by which certain territories were handed over to foreign rulers, no regard being paid to the wishes of the inhabitants, or to the principle of nationality. The most glaring instances of this fault were the re-partition of Poland, already mentioned, the handing over of the Italians of Lombardy and Venetia to Austria, and the joining together of Holland and Belgium under the Dutch king. The main result which emerged from the Treaty of Vienna was that the three victorious land-powers, Russia, Prussia, and Austria, become masters of the Continent.

Of the many conquests which Britain had made all over the world from France and her allies—Spain, Holland, and Denmark—a great part was restored. The French and Spanish West Indian isles—St. Lucia, Tobago, and Trinidad—were retained. So was Malta, and also Mauritius (in the Indian Ocean). But Java and Sumatra, Holland's valuable East Indian isles, were restored, though a few years later the Dutch agreed to give up Malacca<sup>1</sup> to Britain, in exchange for a British station in Sumatra. The Danes surrendered the rock of Heligoland in the North Sea, and a British protectorate was established over the Ionian Islands in the eastern Mediterranean. We paid the Dutch three million pounds to keep British Guiana, and six million pounds to keep the Cape of Good Hope; we also kept Ceylon. Most of these places—Malta, the Cape, Mauritius, Ceylon, Singapore—were valued as being useful ports of call for the Navy and merchant-ships rather than as possible colonies. Hanover was of course restored to the British king; but this remained a purely personal union.

British  
Gains in  
1815

### *Summary of the Vienna Settlement, 1815*

#### *A. Settlement of Europe.*

1. *Germany.* All Germany, under the leadership of Austria, was formed into the German Confederation (now thirty-nine states instead of over three hundred and fifty before Napoleon), which

<sup>1</sup> Singapore, which commands the Straits of Malacca, was bought by Sir Stamford Raffles in 1819 for the East India Company from the Rajah of Johore.

lasted till 1866. *Austria* received the Italian province of Lombardy (which she had held before the war) and, in addition, the whole territory of the ancient Italian republic of Venice—a short-sighted arrangement. *Prussia* received a large part of Saxony (which had always fought for Napoleon) and another large province in western Germany, known as the Rhine Province and Westphalia.

2. *Italy*. All the old states were restored, except the republics of Venice (to Austria) and Genoa (to Sardinia).

3. North Europe. *Russia* received most of Poland, also Finland from Sweden. *Sweden* was compensated with Norway (formerly Danish)—Norway and Sweden remained united till 1905.

4. Holland and Belgium were joined together as the *Kingdom of the Netherlands*, under a Dutch ruler. This union lasted till the Belgians revolted in 1830.

5. The *Turkish Empire* was not dealt with, but Russia had gained Bessarabia shortly before 1815.

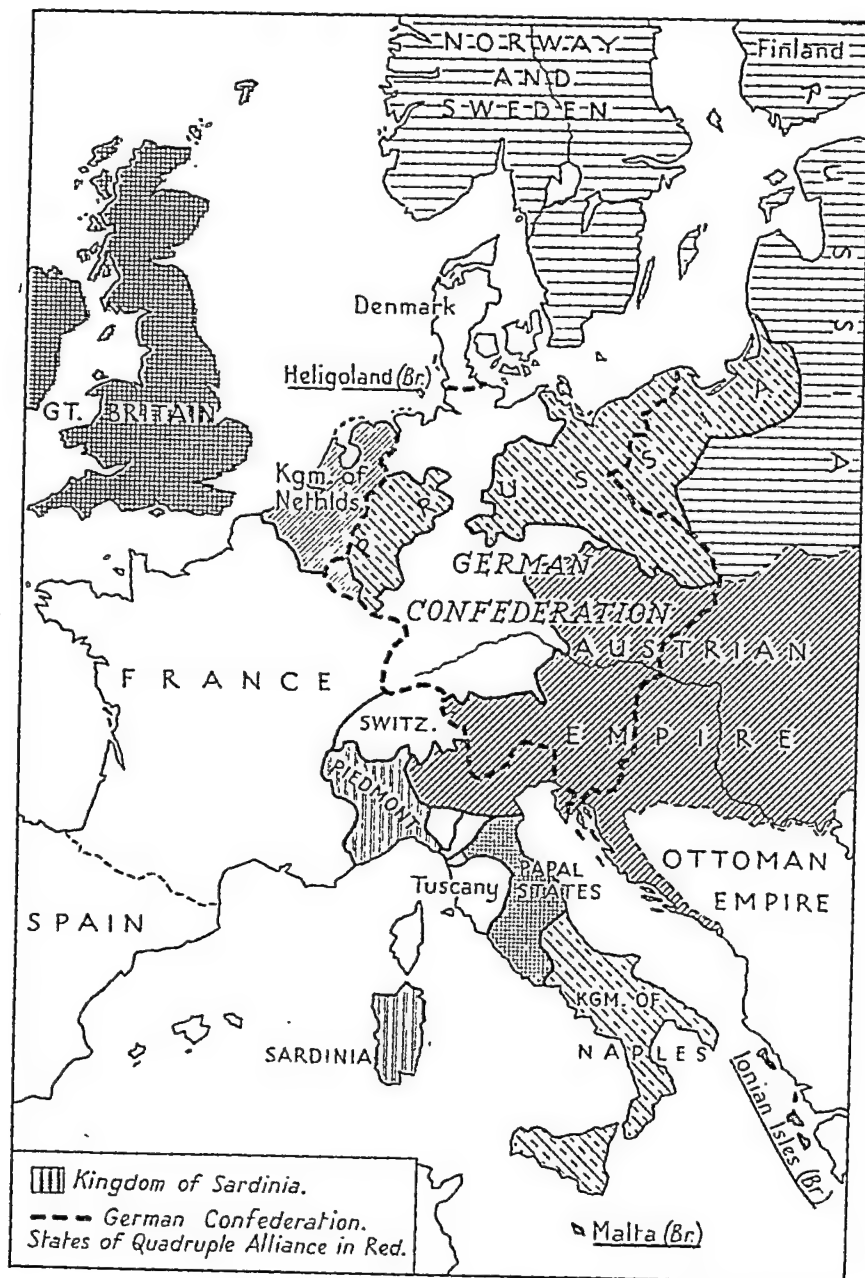
#### *B. British Gains in 1815.*

1. In Europe: Heligoland (from Denmark), Malta, and the Ionian Isles (Greece). Hanover restored.

2. In America: St. Lucia, Tobago, Trinidad, British Honduras, and British Guiana.<sup>1</sup>

3. In Africa and the Indian Ocean: Cape Colony, Mauritius, and (in 1824 but arising out of this Treaty) Malacca. Ceylon had been ceded to Britain by the Dutch in 1802 (Treaty of Amiens).

<sup>1</sup> Surinam (Dutch Guiana) was restored to Holland.



II. EUROPE IN 1815



# DATE SUMMARY: THE GREAT FRENCH WAR (1793-1815)

SEA	BRITISH MILITARY EFFORTS	FRANCE AND EUROPE
THE CONVENTION AND THE DIRECTORY (1793-9)		
1793 Siege of Toulon	1793 British expedition to Netherlands	1793-5 Conquest of Belgium and Holland
1794 ✕ 1st of June		1795 Treaty of Basle (Prussia) Spain makes peace Directory in France
1795 Landing at Cape Town		1796-7 Napoleon's Italian Campaign Conquest of N. Italy
1796-7 Ceylon and Dutch East Indies		1797 Treaty of Campo Formio
1797 (Feb.) ✕ Cape St. Vincent Trinidad captured	1798-1905 Wellesley in India	1799 Second Coalition
1798 ✕ Nile		1799 Napoleon's <i>Coup d'état</i>
1799 Siege of Acre Nelson at Naples		
NAPOLEON FIRST CONSUL (1799-1804)		
1800 British take Malta		1800 ✕ Marengo
1801 Armed Neutrality of the North First ✕ Copenhagen		1802 Treaty of Amiens 1803 War renewed 1804 Napoleon Emperor
NAPOLEON EMPEROR (1804-15)		
1804-5 Invasion of England scheme		1805 Third Coalition ✕ Austerlitz Napoleon master of Italy and Germany
1805 ✕ Trafalgar		1806 ✕ Jena. Napoleon in Berlin
1807 Second ✕ Copenhagen British fleet in the Tagus	1808 Wellesley in Portugal ✕ Vimiero	1807 Treaty of Tilsit French invade Portugal
	1809 Walcheren Expedition	1808 Joseph Bonaparte, King of Spain
	1810-11 Torres Vedras	1809 ✕ Wagram
1812-14 American War	1812 ✕ Salamanca	1812 Retreat from Moscow
	1813 ✕ Vitoria	1813 Fourth Coalition ✕ Leipzig
	1814 ✕ Toulouse	1814 Treaty of Chaumont Allies invade France Napoleon abdicates
	1815 (June) ✕ Waterloo	1815 (Feb.) Napoleon escapes from Elba (Mar.-June) Hundred Days 1815 Treaty of Vienna
FRENCH GOVERNMENTS		COALITIONS (v. FRANCE)
The Convention	1792-5	First Coalition 1793-5
The Directory	1795-9	Second " 1799-1800
The Consulate	1799-1804	Third " 1805
The Empire	1804-14 and 1815	Fourth " 1813-15

## XXXIII

### IRELAND (1775-1800)

#### I. *Grattan*

FOR eighty years after the broken Treaty of Limerick,<sup>1</sup> there is little to record in the history of Ireland. The country was quiet, but it was the quietness of death. In an earlier chapter it was shown how England crushed Ireland, first by military conquest, and then by a systematic persecution. Penal laws were enacted against the Roman Catholics, and a fierce commercial code ruined Irish industries, lest they should compete with those of Britain. Hundreds of Irishmen, despairing of their own unhappy country, emigrated abroad. The King of France had a special brigade, called the Irish Brigade, formed entirely of exiled Irishmen. These men revenged themselves on England by fighting against her on the Continent, during the various wars of the eighteenth century.

Ireland in the eighteenth century

Irish Emigration

Some improvement in the position of the Catholics—the vast majority of the people—took place towards the middle of the century; the more absurd of the laws restricting their freedom were allowed to fall into disuse. There were still, however, many circumstances which made Ireland a discontented land, and certainly the worst-governed part of the dominions of the British Crown.

The conquest of Ireland under Cromwell and William III had led to a re-settlement of the smaller island by an intolerant, Protestant England. One result of this had been that the native Catholic landlords had been dispossessed of their lands, which had then been given to men of an alien race—Englishmen or Scots. To imagine Ireland in the eighteenth century, we must picture a nation ruled by foreigners—English officials at Dublin Castle, and men of English descent as the squires of every village. It was to these Protestant, Anglo-Irish families that all political power was confined. No Catholic was allowed to vote, still less to sit in Parliament, or

The Protestant Oligarchy

<sup>1</sup> See above, Chapter XXV.



to take part in local government. The Irish Parliament, which sat at Dublin, was allowed to pass only such laws as the English Government approved. Such was the state of Catholic Ireland. The Protestant North was scarcely better off, for Ulster was Presbyterian. Here again, English religious bigotry did its evil work; the Ulster Presbyterians were prevented by the Test Act from taking any part in the government. Thus the vast majority of the people of Ireland, both in Ulster and in the Catholic South, was excluded from all political power, which was jealously confined to the nominees of Dublin Castle. The Irish Parliament was, if possible, more corrupt than that of England; the rotten borough system ensured that the nominated members should continue to serve the interests of the English ascendancy.<sup>1</sup>

Religious  
bigotry

The Irish  
Parliament

Was it possible that such a country as Ireland should rise from the ashes of its degradation? The history of Ireland during the last quarter of the eighteenth century supplied the answer to this question. For then the oppressed nation made a great and almost successful effort to break its bonds; then it found a leader; then the age-long strife with England came near to a peaceful settlement. But then this fateful quarter-century (1775-1800), which began with such promise of better things, ended in the old unhappy way—in civil war, and in unsuccessful rebellion.

Fateful  
years  
1775-1800

It was among the Protestants that Ireland first found a leader. The Irish Protestant Parliament, dependent as it was on England, chafed under its servitude. Among its members were many who resented the fact that Ireland was bound to a foreign master, and who wished to loosen the bonds. Henry Grattan, the leader of the national revival, was a moderate-minded, earnest Irish patriot, who desired the freedom of all his countrymen, the Catholics no less than his fellow Protestants. As statesman and orator, Grattan is only to be compared, among eighteenth-century leaders, with the elder Pitt. Had a bolder and more far-seeing man than Pitt's son been in charge of affairs at Westminster in Grattan's day, the Irish problem might have been solved before 1790.

Henry  
Grattan

<sup>1</sup> The Irish Parliament was generally more anti-Catholic than the English Parliament, because it feared the Catholics more.

'England's difficulty is Ireland's opportunity' is a saying the truth of which has often been shown in history. The two main crises through which England passed in this quarter-century—the American Revolution and the War of the French Revolution—both had important reactions on Ireland. The outbreak of the American War caused Ireland to be denuded of English troops; and, when in 1778 France declared war upon Great Britain, there was a very serious danger that Ireland would be conquered by the French, and afterwards used as a base for attacking England.

The  
American  
War

The Irish  
Volunteers

Repeal of  
the Com-  
mercial  
Laws, 1780;  
and of  
Poyning's  
Act, 1782

After all the oppression which Ireland had endured at English hands, it seems strange that a French attack was not welcomed by the Irish during the American War. That it was not was largely due to the efforts of Grattan, who encouraged the formation of Irish volunteer regiments to defend the country in case of invasion. The formation of the Volunteers caused no little alarm in England, but they served their purpose; there was no French invasion. At the same time, the enthusiasm with which Catholic and Protestant alike rushed to the colours proved that Irish national feeling was not dead. Grattan used the occasion to extort concessions from England, which Lord North's Government dared not refuse, in the face of the armed Volunteers.<sup>1</sup> So in 1780 the obnoxious commercial code was swept away. This was the first step. Then (1782) Lord Rockingham's short-lived Government repealed Poyning's Act, which had for three long centuries bound the Irish Parliament to the dictates of the English Privy Council. The Dublin Parliament was made free of the control of Westminster, and started on its brief career (1782-1800) as an independent body.

There were still two reforms for which there was a crying need. These were a Reform Bill for Ireland (no less necessary for England!) to abolish government by bribery and rotten boroughs, and Roman Catholic Emancipation, i.e. the abolition of all the laws by which the Catholic majority was excluded from political power. It was these reforms which the moderate

A lost  
oppor-  
tunity  
1783-93

<sup>1</sup> The success of the American rebels, who had fewer grievances than the Irish, had made the British Government less confident, and more willing to compromise.

element in Ireland, led by the Protestant Grattan, ardently desired. For a whole decade (1783-93) Grattan led Ireland, while Pitt ruled England. The Irish reformers could not agree among themselves, and Pitt did nothing. Perhaps in his heart Pitt saw the force of Grattan's arguments, but he could not carry his English Tory adherents with him. So he let the sleeping dogs lie—with disastrous results.

## 2. *The Rebellion and the Union*

The effects of the French Revolution were soon felt in Ireland. There was a widespread movement in favour of the French ideals; and soon a party was formed which demanded far more than Grattan had ever contemplated. The United Irishmen, a society formed in 1792, was anti-English and republican in aim. Its leaders, Wolfe Tone and Lord Edward Fitzgerald, sought to unite the Catholics of the South with the Presbyterians of the North against the rule of England.

Pitt made one concession to Irish feeling by granting the vote to Catholics (1793). Then, in 1795, he sent over Lord Fitzwilliam, a Whig who had joined his government at the time of the Burke-Fox split.<sup>1</sup> Fitzwilliam was a man of liberal views; he entirely sympathized with the idea of complete Catholic emancipation, and he led the Irish to suppose that such was the view of the British Government. If he thought that Pitt would support him, he was deceived; after a few months he was recalled to England. His recall had a most unfortunate effect in Ireland; it was taken for granted that the limit of British concessions had now been reached. The wilder spirits therefore moved towards open rebellion.

The United Irishmen now began to correspond with the French republicans, who promised to come to their aid. A French general, Hoche, appeared with a fleet in Bantry Bay, with 15,000 soldiers on board. A storm dispersed the ships, and Hoche failed to land; had he done so, Britain might have found her supremacy in Ireland endangered.

Meanwhile, Wolfe Tone's effort to include the Protestants in his organization broke down owing to his alliance with the Catholic 'Defender' movement. The 'United' Irishmen

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 696.

became a misnomer; that society was now almost entirely composed of Roman Catholics, and hatred of the English was stirred up by the priests. In Ulster, Orange Lodges were formed to combat the danger from Catholics; Protestants all over the country rallied to the Government to save the country from a French invasion. A horrible civil war broke out wherever Orangemen and Catholics came in contact. The Government employed Protestant yeomanry to put down the United Irishmen; the yeomanry hunted down suspected Catholics in a manner reminiscent of the worst days of Cromwell or Elizabeth. Once again ugly passions were aroused in the name of religion; murders and other outrages were committed by both sides.

The excesses of which the Protestant yeomanry were guilty provoked the rebellion of '98. The rising was ill planned and soon suppressed. General Lake defeated the main rebel force at Vinegar Hill, County Wexford. Other local efforts, led in many cases by priests, were put down, all with great cruelty. The French sent a small force (1,000 men) under General Humbert which landed in Killala Bay, routed some of Lake's troops at Castlebar, but was finally outnumbered and forced to surrender. Another French expedition was destroyed at sea. On board one of the captured ships was Wolfe Tone, the Irish leader. He was tried for treason, and sentenced to death, but committed suicide in prison. The heroic Lord Edward Fitzgerald had already been captured fighting, and had died of his wounds.

When the last Catholic rising had been stamped out, and the last Frenchman captured, Ireland once more lay at the feet of her conqueror. Lord Cornwallis, who had just come over as Viceroy, deplored the intolerant tone he found among the English officials at Dublin Castle, and among his own officers. Pitt, at last giving some attention to Irish affairs, now decided to bring about a union of the Parliaments, such as had already taken place between England and Scotland. Lord Castlereagh, who was Secretary to the Viceroy, was entrusted with the task of putting the Bill of Union through the Irish Parliament. Two methods were employed to induce the Irish Parliament to vote for its own abolition. One was the usual method—bribery.

Money was poured out to members of the Dublin Parliament; lavish promises of peerages were made. Pitt's second method<sup>1</sup> was to hold out the promise of Catholic Emancipation to Ireland; Catholics were to be allowed to sit in Parliament, and the remaining laws against them repealed. It was this promise—which deceived the Catholics into thinking they were going to receive their freedom—which Pitt found himself unable to carry out.

The Bill of Union (1800) was introduced by Lord Castlereagh into the Irish Parliament, and carried in spite of Grattan's opposition. In one of his noblest speeches the Irish patriot spoke against the measure, and prophesied that the day would come when Ireland would regain her liberty:

'Liberty may repair her golden beams, and with redoubled heart animate the country . . . I do not give up the country. I see her in a swoon, but she is not dead; though in her tomb she lies helpless and motionless, still there is on her lips a spirit of life, and on her cheeks a glow of beauty:

Thou art not conquered; beauty's ensign yet  
Is crimson in thy lips and in thy cheeks,  
And death's pale flag is not advanced there.'<sup>2</sup>

The Bill was passed, and the Dublin Parliament came to an end (1 January 1801). Ireland was for the future to be represented by 100 members in the House of Commons at Westminster, and by 28 peers and 4 bishops in the British House of Lords. And there was at last to be free trade between the two islands.

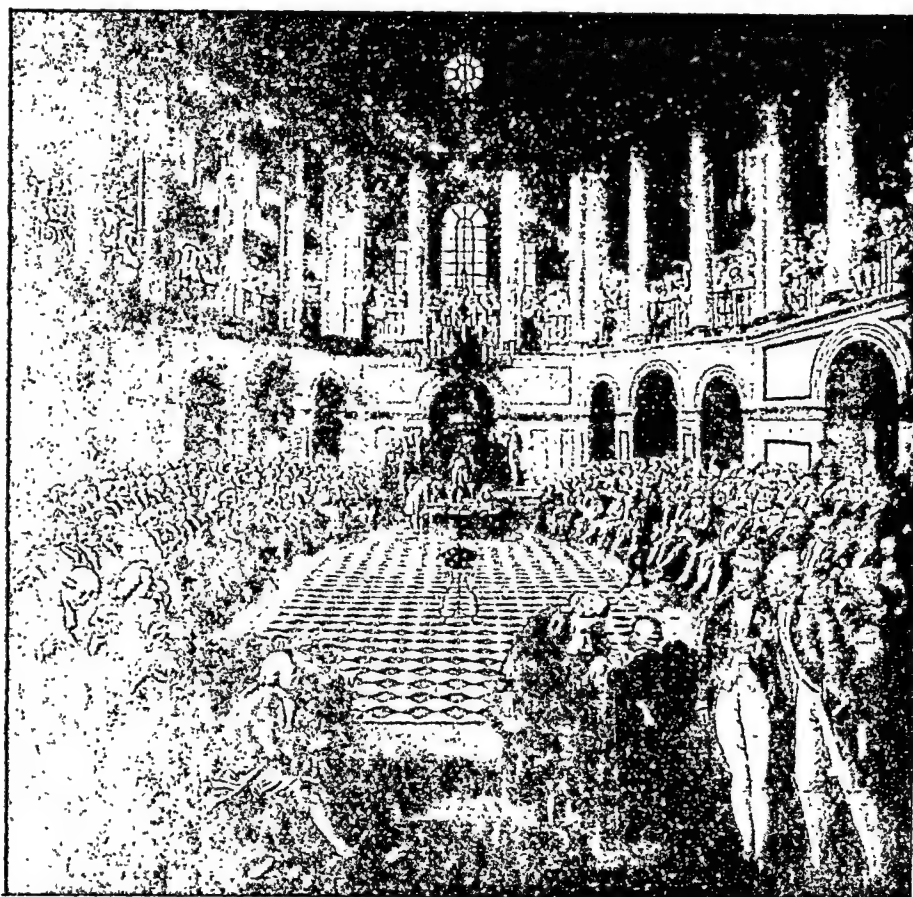
The Union might have been made to work had the promise of Catholic Emancipation been carried out; as the promise was broken, there was no chance of the Union working successfully. Pitt had intended to carry out his promise. But, when he found that George III considered that to give the Irish Catholics their political freedom would be to violate his coronation oath, the

Pitt's  
broken  
promise

<sup>1</sup> This method had no influence on the Irish Parliament, which was more against Catholic Emancipation than the English Parliament. But it had much influence upon educated Catholic opinion, most of which had never been in favour of Wolfe Tone's activities.

<sup>2</sup> The quotation is from *Romeo and Juliet*.

Premier gave way. Pitt salved his conscience by resigning (1801). In Ireland a distracted people looked forward to the nineteenth century, which was destined, like most of its predecessors, to bring the country fresh difficulties, and hopes doomed to disappointment.



THE GREAT PARLIAMENT OF IRELAND, ELECTED 1790

## XXXIV

### THE EMPIRE UNDER GEORGE III

#### I. *India*

##### (i) *Warren Hastings.*

After Clive's career in India,<sup>1</sup> the whole problem of Anglo-Indian relations entered on a new stage. Before Clive's conquest of Bengal, the East India Company had been concerned merely with matters of trade; now, for better or worse, the servants of the Company had taken over political power. No one, even then, could foresee that the whole of India was destined to pass under British control. But it was already obvious that British responsibilities were too great to be left to the Company alone. Lord North's Government therefore passed the Regulating Act (1773). By this Act the Governor of Bengal was made Governor-General of all the Company's possessions in India. He was to rule with the aid of a Council of Four, whose vote could restrain his actions. He was also bound to submit his political decisions to the approval not only of the Company, but of the British Government.

North's  
Regulating  
Act, 1773

It was under this Act that Warren Hastings, who had already been, for two years, Governor of Bengal, was appointed Governor-General of India. The first in the long line of Governor-Generals, Warren Hastings stands not unworthily at the head of those men whom Britain has sent to govern the East—men who have seldom failed to play a great part on that magnificent stage. Hastings' qualities—resourcefulness, a high courage, and a capacity for hard work—were just those that were needed. For the eleven years of his rule were a testing time, and a time when lesser men, such as those who had to deal with the American War, might easily have lost India.

Warren  
Hastings  
1774-85

However, Warren Hastings was only human, and he made mistakes, of which his enemies took advantage. He was hampered at every turn by the Council of Four, whom the constitution (under the Regulating Act) obliged him to consult.

Hastings  
and the  
Council

<sup>1</sup> See above, pp. 612-17.

Three of its members, including the vindictive Philip Francis, were his personal enemies, so that he could seldom obtain a majority vote in the Council for his measures. At last a crisis arose over the execution of a wealthy Hindu, named Nuncomar, for forgery. The Council sympathized with Nuncomar, and Francis believed (and afterwards asserted) that the Hindu had been put out of the way because he was about to expose Hastings' own misdeeds. In 1776 one of Hastings' three enemies on the Council died, and the situation became less strained. But Hastings and Francis ultimately fought a duel; Francis was severely wounded, and had to return to England, where he did his best to poison every one's mind against the Governor-General.

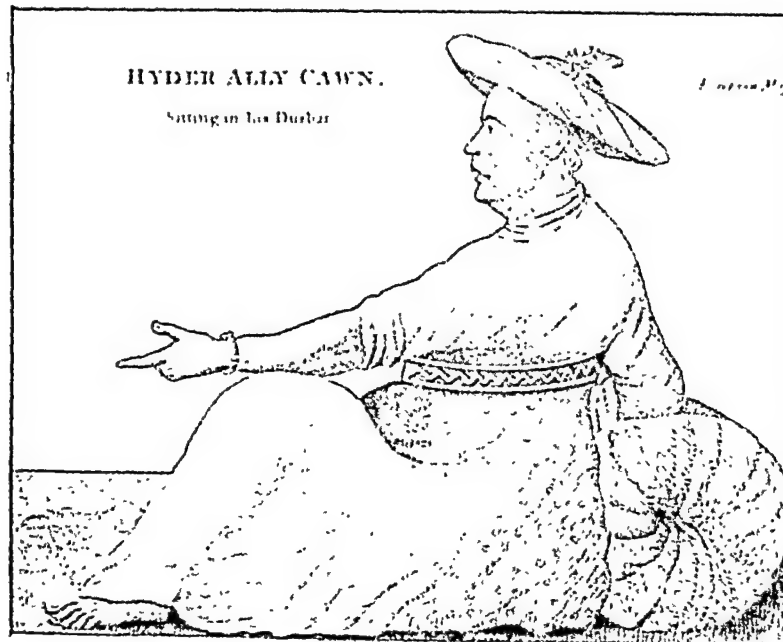
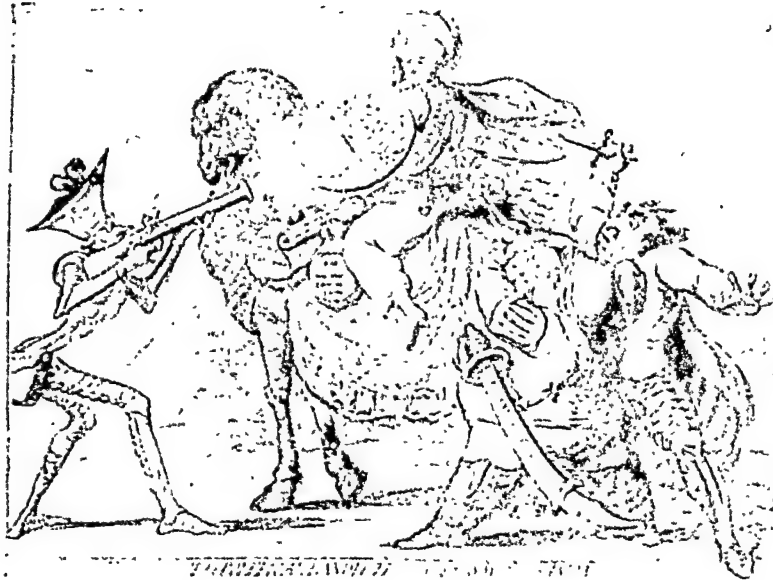
The main crisis of Hastings' rule arose on the outbreak of the Maritime War with France (1778-83).<sup>1</sup> The danger was that the French would give help to those native princes in India who were hostile to the British power. Of these princes the most formidable were the chieftains of the famous Mahratta Confederacy, and Hyder Ali, the able and warlike ruler of Mysore. The first Mahratta War, which Hastings waged, was of short duration, and the main trouble arose in southern India. Hyder Ali was a Mohammedan adventurer who had usurped the throne of Mysore from Hindu rulers. In 1780 he invaded the Carnatic, which was under British protection, and threatened Madras itself. Hastings, as soon as he heard the news, acted with great vigour: he sent Sir Eyre Coote with all the men he could collect to the Carnatic. Coote, on the scene of his former triumphs,<sup>2</sup> beat Hyder Ali at Porto Novo, and so saved Madras. Meanwhile, the French had entered the conflict. Admiral Suffren, with a strong squadron, did his best to cut the British sea communications with India. He was opposed by Admiral Sir Edward Hughes. This naval struggle, though fought for three years, was indecisive. The death of Hyder Ali (1782), and the end of the French War (1783), at last brought peace to India. Thanks to Warren Hastings British India had not gone the way of the American Colonies.

Hastings left India in 1785. On his return home, instead of receiving the public recognition which his great service

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 631.

<sup>2</sup> See above, p. 613.





#### INDIA IN THE REIGN OF GEORGE III

*Above*, a satirical print of 1786, issued during the trial of Warren Hastings, showing him assailed by Burke, North, and Fox. *Below*, a contemporary portrait of Hyder Ali.

deserved, he had to stand his trial for misgoverning India. The long and protracted trial of Warren Hastings in Westminster Hall, which went on, with various postponements, for seven years (1788-95), formed one of the most famous scenes in English legal history. The principal witnesses for the prosecution were Philip Francis and other enemies from India. On their side they had the powerful aid of Edmund Burke, who knew nothing about India, but who had formed the opinion that Warren Hastings was a tyrant. The old accusation that Hastings had unjustly procured the execution of Nuncomar was renewed, and other specific charges were made.<sup>1</sup> Burke thundered with all his eloquence against the accused; he said that the acts complained of were 'the damned and damnable proceedings of a judge in hell, and such a judge was Warren Hastings'. In the end Hastings was acquitted; he retired into private life, and lived to the age of 93. False as were most of the accusations made against him, his trial did good in one way. Burke's eloquent appeal on behalf of the suffering millions of India, whom he supposed Hastings to have misruled, awoke a sense of responsibility in Britain towards the peoples under our rule. This sense of responsibility, coupled with the abolition of slavery, did much to mould the character of the Second British Empire which was built up after Waterloo.

(ii) *Cornwallis and Wellesley.*

When Pitt took office (1783), it was generally recognized that further legislation was necessary to amend Lord North's Act, under which Warren Hastings had done his best to govern India. Pitt therefore introduced his India Act (1784). By this Act the position of the Governor-General was strengthened; he was made independent of his Council, which became only an advisory body. In London a special Board of Control (the forerunner of the India Office) was set up to deal with Indian affairs, and through it the Government was able to guide Indian policy, with the co-operation of the Governor-General. The Company was to confine itself to commercial affairs, and had

<sup>1</sup> See Macaulay's *Essay on Warren Hastings* for full details. Macaulay, however, accepts too readily the charges made against the Governor-General.

no voice in the appointment of the Governor-General. This arrangement lasted till the abolition of the Company in 1858.

Pitt's first appointment under the Act was Lord Cornwallis, of Yorktown fame, who became Governor-General for seven years (1786-93). He made what is known as the Permanent Settlement of Bengal. He laid down regulations for the administration of justice, and the collection of revenue, which on the whole worked well, and which became the model for future British provinces. Cornwallis also embarked on a war with Mysore, now ruled by Tippoo Sultan, the son of Hyder Ali. Tippoo was a no less aggressive person than his father; in 1789 he invaded Travancore, a state which was under the protection of the Madras government. But he was defeated by the British forces, and as a result was forced to cede some of the outlying portions of his dominions to the Company.

Lord  
Cornwallis  
1786-93

Second  
Mysore  
War

In 1793 Cornwallis left India, and was succeeded by Sir John Shore, whose five years' rule (1793-8) was an uneventful period. After him came the Marquis Wellesley, whose vigorous personality at once stamped itself on Indian affairs. Wellesley was more far-sighted than either the East India Company or the British Government. He realized that Britain could not rule part of India peacefully without dominating the whole, and he therefore determined to change the British Empire *in* India to the British Empire *of* India. It took so long for news to get from Britain to India and back again that Wellesley was able on the whole to pursue his policy without serious interference.

Wellesley  
1793-1805

Wellesley arrived in India at the time of the French expedition to Egypt, when the success or failure of Bonaparte's schemes still hung in the balance. Tippoo Sultan of Mysore, England's sworn foe, had declared himself in favour of the French Revolution—he was 'Citizen Tippoo', the ally of Napoleon. Wellesley soon decided that Tippoo must be crushed before Napoleon could either send aid or—what was not thought unlikely—come himself to India. Wellesley began with Hyderabad, a large but unmilitary state sandwiched between warlike neighbours, Mysore and the Mahratta chieftains. Wellesley offered the British alliance to the Nizam of Hyderabad—with the alternative of war. The Nizam was easily persuaded to abandon the French alliance, to keep an army under

Citizen  
Tippoo

The Nizam

British officers, and to join with Wellesley against Tippoo and the Mahrattas. The alliance with the Nizam was thus made the key-stone of Wellesley's policy in southern India. It was the first of these subsidiary alliances by means of which he and his successors entered into a league with half India for the purpose of conquering the other half.

The Sub-  
sidiary  
Alliance  
Policy

Third  
Mysore  
War, 1799

The Mysore War, which shortly broke out, did not last long. The campaign was conducted by Sir Arthur Wellesley, the Governor-General's younger brother (afterwards the victor of Waterloo), who easily beat Tippoo's army in the field, and besieged his capital, Seringapatam. British cannon battered down the walls, the troops entered the town, and Tippoo was killed in the fight. After this the danger from Mysore was over. Wellesley annexed the eastern coast-line and other parts, so that Mysore was reduced to half its former size. He restored the ancient line of Hindu rajahs, whom Tippoo's father had deposed; and the restored rulers became, like the Nizam, the allies of the Company. Shortly after this, the Carnatic was put definitely under the rule of the Governor of Madras (1801), so that all the south of India came under British control.

Conquest of  
Mysore,  
and of the  
Carnatic

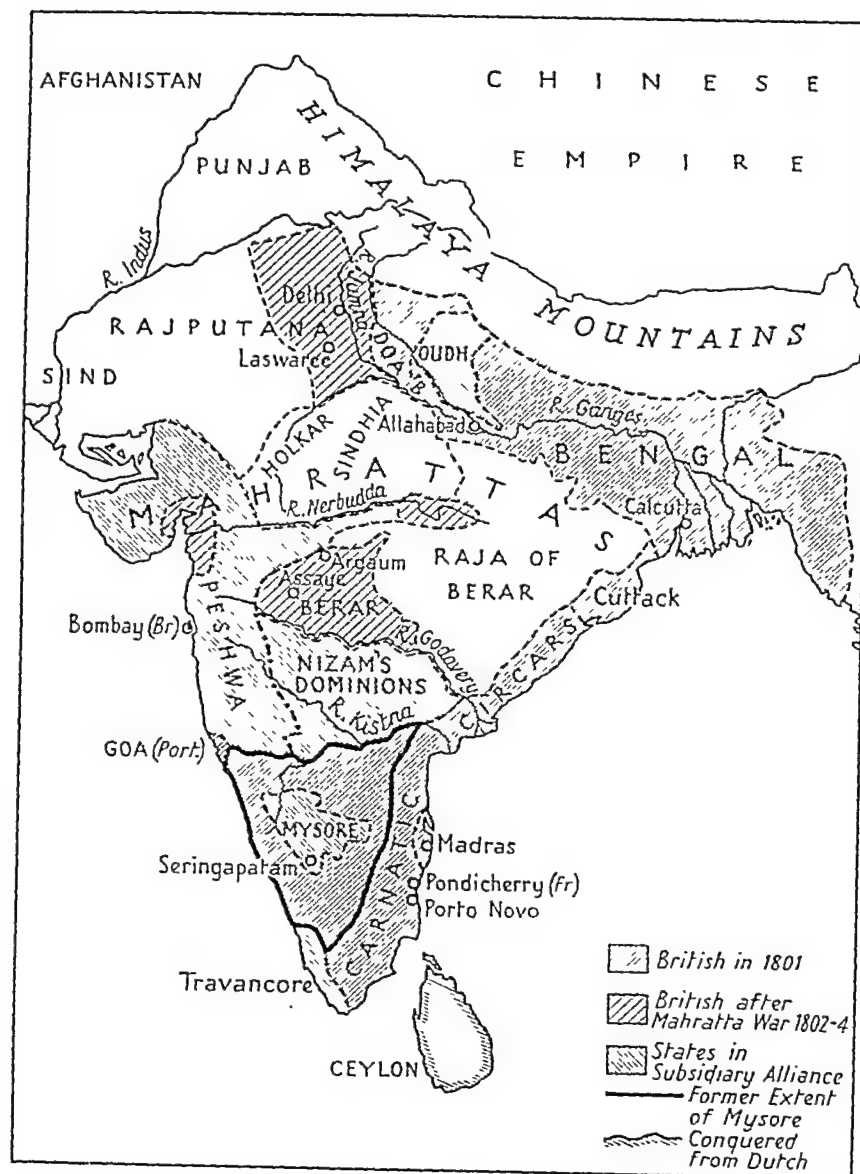
Treaty  
with Oudh

Wellesley now turned his attention to northern India, and formed, with the Nawab of Oudh, an alliance similar to that already made with the Nizam. The Nawab also ceded a tract of territory known as the Doab (see map) directly to the Company. Soon after this Wellesley came into contact with the Mahrattas, whose chieftains were then engaged in fighting among themselves. In 1802, the Peshwa, their nominal head, was defeated in battle by his neighbours, and fled to the British for protection. Wellesley thereupon concluded a treaty with him (31 December 1802) and engaged to go to war with his enemies.

Treaty of  
Bassein  
1802

This alliance soon involved Wellesley in a war with Sindhia and Bhonsla, two of the Mahratta chieftains. General Wellesley again took the field, and defeated the Mahrattas at the battles of Assaye and Argaum—in the former with odds of ten to one against him. After this, Bhonsla submitted, surrendered some territory, and agreed to become a British 'ally'. At the same time General Lake attacked Sindhia, whose territories lay next to those of Oudh, and took from him Delhi, the capital city of India. After the storming of Delhi, the British took possession

Mahratta  
War  
1803-5



12. INDIA UNDER WELLESLEY



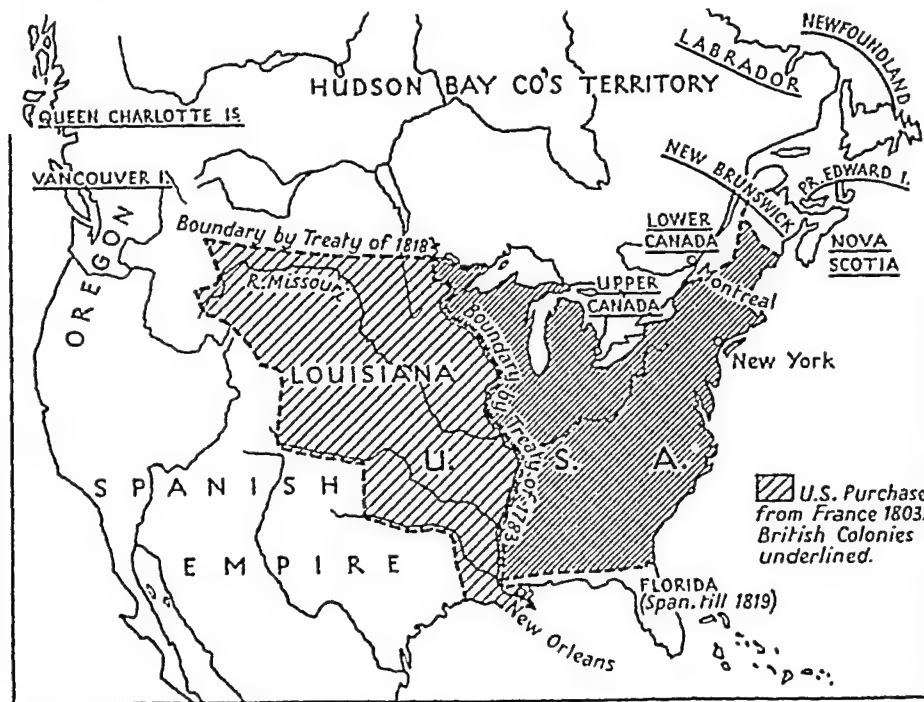
of the person of the Great Mogul, who had long been the prisoner of the Mahrattas, so that the Mogul now exchanged masters. One more battle—Laswaree—sufficed to complete the ruin of Sindhia. He also submitted, and surrendered a large slice of territory round Delhi. The third Mahratta chief, Holkar, who had so far stood aloof from the war, now tried conclusions with the British. He was more successful than his fellow chieftains, and inflicted one severe defeat on the British forces. It was this military reverse, together with the cost of the operations, which led to Wellesley's recall. The British government had become alarmed at the lengths to which his policy was leading them (1805). Capture of Delhi, 1803  
Recall of Wellesley 1805

Wellesley, in his few years of power, had laid the foundations of British India. The map shows his work in consolidating the British possessions in the Peninsula—north, east, and south. He had struck the first great blow at the Mahratta power, which one of his successors was to complete by the final humiliation of that once-powerful confederacy. Henceforth the British were the unquestioned masters of India. For good or ill, Wellesley's work was done; his successors had to live up to the position which he had created, and from which there could be no going back. Whatever may be thought of Wellesley's somewhat high-handed methods, it must be admitted that his work brought peace to India. The *Pax Britannica*, which he inaugurated, depended upon the defeat of the military states, like Mysore, and the absorption of the weak by alliances or direct annexation. The success of his policy meant a new empire for Britain in the East, and a new market for British manufactures. It also meant an unwonted peace for India, as well as the gradual introduction of European methods, and all that has followed from that up to the present day. Holkar  
His work  
The Pax Britannica

## 2. Canada

The present Dominion of Canada has grown out of the small province which Britain conquered from France in 1763. This province consisted of a strip of territory on either side of the St. Lawrence, from Lake Ontario to the mouth of the river. It contained only about 70,000 colonists, all Frenchmen. Two hundred miles east of Canada lay another ex-French colony— British North America in 1763

Acadie or Nova Scotia, which had been ceded to England at the Peace of Utrecht (1713). Here the population was mixed French and British, the French predominating. To the north and west of Canada lay the vast undefined territory of the Hudson's Bay Company, sparsely peopled by hunters and fur traders.



NORTH AMERICA AT THE BEGINNING OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

The problem of dealing with the French-speaking, Catholic inhabitants of Canada was solved by a great British administrator, Sir Guy Carleton, afterwards Lord Dorchester, who twice held office as Governor of Canada. Carleton's work was to reconcile the French population to a foreign rule. He achieved this by showing respect for both the customs and the religion of the Canadians, and by persuading the British government to pass the Quebec Act (1774), by which freedom of worship was guaranteed to Roman Catholics in Canada.

Sir Guy  
Carleton  
Quebec  
Act, 1774

The extent of Carleton's success was shown by the fact that the Canadians remained loyal to him during the American War, when he was able successfully to repel the invasion of Canada by



the revolted colonists.<sup>1</sup> Immediately after the war a new problem arose. About 40,000 former residents of the American Colonies fled from their homes, and took refuge under the British flag. They were known as the United Empire Loyalists, and their crime, in the eyes of their fellow countrymen, was that they had declared themselves in favour of the continuance of British rule. Now that victory (1783) had crowned the efforts of the revolted colonists, they were not at all disposed to show mercy to the Loyalists, who were hounded out of the United States. The victims fled to Nova Scotia, and from there founded the separate province of New Brunswick (see map). Others settled among the French in Canada, but more still penetrated the forests to the north-east of Lake Ontario, and settled a new province—Ontario—between the Great Lakes and the Albany River.

United  
Empire  
Loyalists

New  
Brunswick

There were now two maritime colonies (Nova Scotia and New Brunswick) and two inland colonies, Ontario and Quebec, known respectively also as Upper Canada and Lower Canada. The problem which faced the younger Pitt, as Prime Minister, was to reconcile the varying interests of the French and British in the two Canadas. He decided that the demand of the British in Upper Canada for a representative form of government—a free Parliament on the English model—could not be refused. But the French Canadians were suspicious of that institution, Parliament, which they described as *un machine anglais pour nous taxer*. Nevertheless, Pitt decided to try the experiment of colonial Parliaments in both the Canadas. But he did not consider it wise to unite the two provinces under one rule, since he thought that the two races would be certain to quarrel. So his Canada Act (1791) provided both Upper and Lower Canada with a Lieutenant-Governor and a Council. Each province was also to have an elected Legislative Assembly, which should vote taxes and pass laws subject to the approval of the Lieutenant-Governor and Council.<sup>2</sup> By this means the demands of the British in Ontario were satisfied, while the French in Quebec were trained to adapt themselves to a British

The two  
Canadas

Pitt's  
Canada Act  
1791

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 629.

<sup>2</sup> The first step towards responsible government. See below, chap. XXXIX.

institution. This compromise worked well for nearly half a century, during which time the population of Ontario rose from 10,000 to 400,000. Large numbers of British people emigrated to the new lands of the West, which the pioneers were opening in the virgin forest of North America.

Just as Anglo-French Canada had remained loyal during the War of American Independence, so the two Canadas stood the shock of the second war, during the conflict with Napoleon, between Britain and the United States. This war, which broke out in 1812, was concerned with the old questions arising out of the British naval supremacy. By the Orders in Council,<sup>1</sup> Britain had forbidden neutrals, including America, to trade with the French Empire. Britain also claimed the right to search American vessels for deserters from the British Navy. The Americans were angry with both France and Britain. But France's diplomacy was better, and the British fleet came into conflict with the U.S.A. vessels more frequently, so the U.S.A. declared war on Britain and the conflict thus began lasted two years. At first it was waged on or near the Great Lakes. There were one or two American raids into Canada, and skirmishes between flotillas on the Lakes. The first fall of Napoleon in 1814 resulted in the Peninsular veterans being sent out to America, after which our position improved. In 1814 the British raided the American capital, Washington, and burnt all the public buildings and the President's house, in revenge for the burning of Toronto; after this unhappy deed they sailed away again. Peace was signed between the American and British representatives at Ghent (1814); but the news did not reach America soon enough to prevent a British attack on New Orleans (January 1815) which was repulsed, with great loss, by an American army under Andrew Jackson. The peace made no change, and showed the futility of the war; but it is significant that in the Crimean War—the next considerable war of the century—Britain abandoned her excessive claims against neutrals.

The  
American  
War of 1812

Peace of  
Ghent  
1814

### 3. *Australia*

Australia takes its name from the Terra Australis Incognita ('Unknown Land of the South') which the sixteenth-century

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 718.



THE BEGINNING OF SETTLEMENT IN AUSTRALIA

An early view of Sydney (about 1800).

*Terra Australis Incognita* map-makers regarded as a huge continent in the southern seas. Such a continent as they imagined did not exist; but the voyages of Tasman and other Dutch navigators in the seventeenth century proved the existence of parts of north and west Australia, and of Tasmania. It was left to an Englishman of the eighteenth century to make the most important discovery of all.

*Captain Cook* Captain James Cook, who had been with Wolfe's expedition up the St. Lawrence to Quebec (1759), was appointed in 1768 to command a scientific expedition to the South Seas. On board were Sir Joseph Banks, a prominent member of the Royal Society, and other scientists. Cook sailed first to Tahiti, then made south for New Zealand (already discovered by the Dutch), where he circumnavigated the islands. From New Zealand the expedition sailed westward and so came to the hitherto undiscovered eastern coast of Australia. Cook's skilful navigation enabled the ships to sail the whole length of the coast-line, in spite of the perils of the Great Barrier Reef. Sir Joseph Banks was much struck by the profuseness of the vegetation in New South Wales, as Cook named the southern part of the country. One spot, in particular, Banks named Botany Bay (1770).

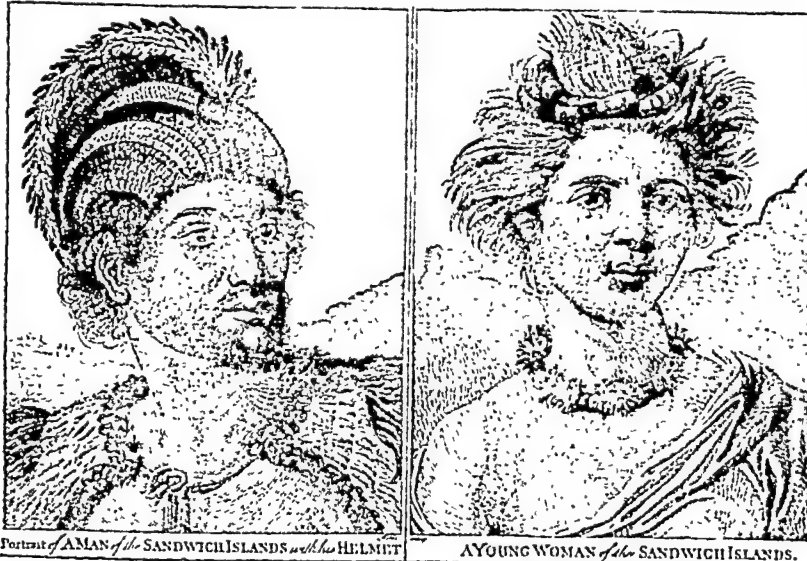
*Botany Bay 1770* Cook made two more voyages to the Pacific, and was killed by some natives at Hawaii in 1779. Sir Joseph Banks urged the Government to profit by his New South Wales discovery, and to send out an expedition to colonize the country. But Pitt and his Home Secretary, Lord Sydney, did not favour the plantation of new colonies. They were impressed, however, by the possibilities of Australia as a convict settlement, now that it was no longer possible to transport felons to the American colonies. In January 1788—a week before a French expedition arrived—Captain Arthur Phillip landed in Botany Bay with the first batch of English prisoners for New South Wales.

*Foundation of New South Wales, 1788* The new settlement was centred upon Port Jackson, afterwards renamed Sydney (in honour of the Home Secretary), north of Botany Bay. The prisoners were guarded by soldiers, and for the first twenty years of its existence the new colony was run on the harsh lines of more than military discipline. *The Settlement* Phillip sent the worst characters to a new settlement in Norfolk Island in the Pacific; another prisoners' colony was also made

in Tasmania (1804). It must be remembered that, in those iron days, men and women were transported overseas for such a 'crime' as stealing a sheep, for the British felony laws were at that time the harshest in Europe. Some of the so-called felons, therefore, were of quite a good type for colonization, though life in the settlements was demoralizing to their character.

In addition, a thin but increasing stream of free emigrants reached Australia. The discovery (in 1813) of a pass over the Blue Mountains, leading to the Bathurst Plains beyond, was important for the future development of the colony. The country beyond the mountains proved to be among the finest grasslands in the world, and the introduction of sheep—some from George III's own farm—founded the prosperity of Australia.<sup>1</sup> Henceforth the immigration of free colonists largely increased. The real history of Australia began with its sheep-farmers and with its intrepid explorers.

<sup>1</sup> See below, Chap. XXXIX.



NATIVES OF THE SANDWICH ISLANDS

## DATE SUMMARY: THE REVOLUTIONARY ERA (1783-1815)

BRITAIN	AMERICA, INDIA, AUSTRALIA	EUROPE
	WILLIAM PITT—PEACE (1783-93)	
1783-1801 Pitt's first Ministry	1784 India Act	
1784 Dr. Johnson <i>d.</i>	1786-93 Cornwallis in India	
1786 Commercial Treaty with France	1787 Constitution of U.S.A.	
	1788-95 Trial of Warren Hastings	
	1789-97 Washington, President U.S.A.	
	1788 Foundation of N. S. Wales	
1790 Burke's <i>Reflections on Fr. Rev.</i>	1790 Nootka Sound	1789 FRENCH REVOLUTION
1791 WESLEY <i>d.</i>	1791 Canada Act	
1792 United Irishmen		1792 France at war with Austria and Prussia
Whig split		September Massacres
Shelley born		✕ Valmy
WAR <sup>1</sup> —PITT AND NELSON (1793-1806)		
1793 War with France		1793-5 Second and Third Partitions of Poland
1794 Habeas Corpus suspended		1793-5 First Coalition
Gibbon <i>d.</i>		
1795 Keats born	1795-6 British take Ceylon and the Cape	1796-7 NAPOLEON in Italy
1796 Burns <i>d.</i>		1797 ✕ C. St. Vincent
		✕ Camperdown
1798 Irish Rebellion	1798-1805 WELLESLEY in India	1798 ✕ NILE
<i>Lyrical Ballads</i>		
1799 Combination Acts	1799 Conquest of Mysore	1799-1800 Second Coalition
1800 ACT OF UNION (BRITAIN AND IRELAND)		
1801 Pitt resigns		
1801-4 Addington Ministry	1803-5 Mahratta War	1802 Treaty of Amiens
		1803 War renewed
1804-6 Pitt's second Ministry		1804 Napoleon Emperor
		1805 Third Coalition
		1805 (Oct.) ✕ TRAFALGAR
		(Dec.) ✕ AUSTERLITZ
1806 Pitt <i>d.</i>		
WAR—CANNING, CASTLEREAGH, AND WELLINGTON (1806-15)		
1806-7 Ministry of All the Talents	1807 Britain ends SLAVE TRADE	1806 End of Holy Roman Empire
1806 Fox <i>d.</i>		Berlin Decree
1807-9 Portland Ministry		1807 Treaty of Tilsit
Canning Foreign Sec.		England seizes Danish fleet
1807 Orders in Council		French invade Portugal
		1808 Napoleon attacks Spain
		1808-14 PENINSULAR WAR
1809-12 Perceval Ministry		
1812-27 LIVERPOOL MINISTRY	1812-14 Anglo-American War	1812 Retreat from Moscow
Castlereagh Foreign Sec. (to 1822)		
		1813 German rising against Napoleon
1814 Scott's <i>Waverley</i>	1814 Treaty of Ghent	1814 Treaty of Chaumont
		1815 Napoleon's Hundred Days
		✕ WATERLOO
		TREATY OF VIENNA

<sup>1</sup> For fuller details of the Great French War, see Chart, p. 731.

## THE NINETEENTH CENTURY—INTRODUCTION

THE nineteenth century was a period of immense advance in material things—in man's conquest of Nature, in the triumphs of Science, in the development of Machinery; indeed, no other century in human history, except the present, can compare with the nineteenth in this respect. But though man's knowledge has advanced by leaps and bounds, his moral progress has not kept pace with his knowledge. The world which boasts of speed and wireless, which can make goods swiftly and cheaply by machinery, is still a world of poverty and hardship for many men and women. It is a world over which still hangs the curse of war.

It was given to Britain to lead the world during the nineteenth century, not only politically, but in the realm of industry. There were several reasons for this. In the first place, the Industrial Revolution began in Britain, and the lead given the country by the great inventors of the eighteenth century was long retained. Secondly, there was no power to challenge British supremacy at sea, and Britain was in a position to capture the markets of the world. Lastly, Britain passed through no revolution, and engaged in no great war, during the century 1815–1914, and thus was able to devote her energies to works of peace. The only exceptions to this reign of peace may be found in the Crimean War (a year and a half), the Boer War, and other colonial wars in Asia and Africa; but from the battle of Waterloo (1815) to the battle of Mons (1914) Britain was involved in no war on a large scale.

Let us briefly review the changes which took place in Britain during this period. The main changes may be grouped under the headings of (i) Scientific and Industrial Progress, (ii) Social and Economic Problems, (iii) Political Changes, and (iv) Imperial Expansion.

It was the gradual realization of the possibilities of the steam-engine<sup>1</sup> during the second half of the eighteenth century which transformed the conditions of human industry. The applica-

<sup>1</sup> See above, Chapter XXX.

tion of steam-power to locomotion on sea and land suggested further possibilities. With the opening of the Stockton and Darlington Railway (1825) the Railway Age began: the Stephensons, father and son, were among the first pioneers in an enterprise in which Britain led the world. The parallel development of the iron-built steamship linked Europe (from 1838) by quick communication with America and with the distant lands of the East.

Steamships  
and  
railways

After steam-power had been applied to both industry and transport, the use of electric-power showed the way to fresh marvels in the service of mankind. The discoveries of the Italians Galvani and Volta, at the end of the eighteenth century, led to the invention of the electric battery; and Michael Faraday (1791-1867) succeeded in making the first electric dynamo. Like steam-power, electricity was afterwards applied to industry and to all kinds of domestic work, and it has produced the great boon of electric lighting and heating. The invention of the Morse Code also enabled sounds tapped out over an electric wire to be sent as messages. The first long-distance telegram was dispatched in England in 1844.<sup>1</sup>

Electricity

It needs but a moment's reflection to see that the harnessing of the enormous powers of Nature, represented by steam and electricity, has completely altered man's place in the Universe. Our knowledge of that Universe is constantly increasing; the sciences of biology and geology (dealing with life itself and with the earth on which that life is found) both made enormous strides during the nineteenth century. Our conception of the age of the earth, which has taken untold millions of years to form into its present shape, and of the evolution of Man himself—these, too, have entirely changed since the days of such pioneers as Charles Lyell and Charles Darwin.<sup>2</sup> Our notions of chemistry, again, have been revolutionized since Dalton (1766-1844) formulated the *atomic theory*, which asserted that the *atoms*, of which all chemical substances are formed, come together according to fixed mathematical rules. Finally, medical science has, during the same century, made enormous strides forward. The use of chloroform, introduced by Doctor

Biology,  
Geology,  
Chemistry

<sup>1</sup> See next chapter.

<sup>2</sup> See below, Chapter XLI.



Simpson (in 1847), has taken away the terror of surgical operations, while the use of antiseptics (from about 1865) by Lord Lister—applying Pasteur's discovery of germs to surgery—has saved countless lives. Surgery

The progress of science, and especially of mechanical science, during the nineteenth century, was an amazing triumph of human endeavour; but there is another side to the picture. Men have been quick to discover and to use new mechanical devices; they have not been equally ready to change their own aims and ideals. The motive of profit-making, rather than the public welfare, swayed men in the use they made of the great mechanical inventions of the nineteenth century. The pioneers of the new industrial England were intent, chiefly, on making their fortunes; they succeeded—and millions of their fellow countrymen became 'factory-hands'. The process helped to create many of the social and economic problems of the present day. (ii) Social and economic problems

Nineteenth-century industry was the child of Capitalism. The new capitalists were often men risen from the ranks of industry, and distinguished for their organizing ability. The enormous profits which the new machines enabled them to make—by producing cheap goods in large quantities—provided them with a surplus of capital. With this capital they were able to plant factories all over industrial England, and then to sell their goods all over the world. At first these industrial pioneers paid little attention to the conditions under which their workmen lived. In a former chapter<sup>1</sup> it was seen how the coming of the factories was responsible for the building of the huge, ugly, sprawling towns of industrial England, with their unhappy legacy of slum life. The employment of women and of little children, working for 10, 12, or even 16 hours a day, in airless, crowded rooms, full of dangerous machinery, was one of the worst scandals of the early nineteenth century. It was the life work of such men as Lord Shaftesbury to compel the masters of industry to employ their workers under more humane conditions. This required interference by the State.<sup>2</sup> Capitalism  
Early factories

The legacy of these early years of the Industrial Revolution

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter XXX.

<sup>2</sup> See Chapter XXXVII.

is still with us. We still have the towns which that age produced, and only a great national effort can transform their mean streets into fit human habitations. And there still lingers the feeling of hostility, of opposing interests, between master and man, dating back to the days of the first factories. This hostility helped to produce, during the nineteenth century, the Trade Unions and the Labour Movement.

(iii) Political changes The England over which George III ruled in the year of Waterloo resembled, in many respects, the England of Walpole. It was still a land of class privilege, where the rulers of England, educated at the same schools and the same universities, accepted the world as they found it, and had no wish to alter it. Their wealth was still mainly derived from the land; their political power rested on an out-of-date parliamentary system. But the rise of a new class—the masters of industry—was destined to challenge the supremacy of the landowners.

Parliamentary Reform in England in the nineteenth century destroyed the virtual monopoly of power which the landowning classes had enjoyed since the fall of the Stuarts. The change was made without a revolution. The Great Reform Bill of 1832 enabled the middle classes of the new towns to have a share of political power. But the later Reform Bills (1867 and 1884) extended the right to vote, not only to the middle classes but also to the artisans and labourers. Hence England, when Queen Victoria died (1901), had become a political democracy. It is our country's pride that no tyrants trample her people down—that Britain is the land of the free. Our parliamentary system has been copied in all the British Dominions, and was, for a time, imitated in the chief European countries.

Education It was not only through her reformed Parliament that Britain became a democracy. The nineteenth century saw the rise of the Trade Unions and the Labour party, and of leagues and committees of all descriptions from the Anti-Corn-Law League to the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. Apart from these vigorous signs of life, there was a great increase in education. The Education Act of 1870 made primary education available for every child in the land, and it was the precursor of other Education Acts which opened secondary

and technical schools and universities to all who were regarded as fit to enter them.

At the end of the Napoleonic War Great Britain was the greatest Imperial power, a position which she held unchallenged for two generations.<sup>1</sup> During the century of peace (1815-1914), Britain made the most of the opportunities which her lead in the industrial race had given her. The Victorian Era (1837-1901) was an age of great prosperity, at any rate for the middle classes, and many were the fortunes made by English manufacturers during these golden years. British goods, as yet unchallenged by German or Japanese rivals, flooded the markets of the world from China to Peru. The Indian Empire was a ready market; and our ships carried British manufactured goods to every corner of the world. (iv) Imp. expansi

With this expansion of trade came an expansion of empire. During the latter half of the nineteenth century, the Far East and Africa were opened up to European enterprise. The British capture of Hong Kong<sup>2</sup> led to the development of the China trade; African territory was seized and parcelled out among the various European powers. Owing to the activities of Cecil Rhodes and others (c. 1880-1900) Britain received the lion's share in the spoils of Africa, and her influence was paramount in southern Asia. At the same time the great colonies—Australia, New Zealand, Canada, and the Cape—were beginning to govern themselves on the British model. The present British Empire, the creation of the nineteenth century, is a combination of self-governing Dominions, together with numerous less developed territories, such as the central African possessions, Nigeria, Malaya, and the British West Indies, some known as Crown Colonies and others as Protectorates. Asia and Africa  
Dominions and Crown Colonies

To sum up: during the nineteenth century the advance of science and the use of machinery were responsible for changes

<sup>1</sup> Russia developed a large Asiatic Empire, and at one time had even a foothold in America. The United States were busily pushing westwards. But this was landward expansion; Britain was the only maritime Imperial power.

<sup>2</sup> Note that maritime possessions of value as strategic points were acquired during the first half of the nineteenth century: Ceylon, 1802; Cape of Good Hope, Mauritius, and Malta, 1815; Singapore, 1819; Aden, 1839; Hong Kong, 1840.

in the material side of life which would have astonished our ancestors, and of which we have probably yet seen only the beginnings. Britain became a democracy; and to-day Britain is, politically, a free country—freer than any other Great Power in Europe. In the Britain of 1815 there was, as we shall see, much wrong and much suffering: there were harsh punishments for slight offences, bad housing conditions, and ill-used factory children. Many good men, from Lord Shaftesbury to Charles Dickens, did much to awaken the public conscience and thus to alter this state of affairs; and the growth of the Humane Spirit in English life was one of the best products of the nineteenth century.

The  
Humane  
Spirit

# TRAVELLING

BY THE

## *Liverpool and Manchester*

# **RAILWAY.**

THE DIRECTORS beg leave to inform the Public that on and after TUESDAY, the 1st of March, the several Trains of Carriages will start from the Station in Crown-street, Liverpool, and from the Station in Liverpool-road, Manchester, in the following order:—

### HOURS OF DEPARTURE.

FIRST CLASS TRAIN . . . . Seven o'clock,	SECOND CLASS TRAIN $\frac{1}{2}$ past 7 o'clock,
_____ . . . . Ten o'clock,	_____ $\frac{12\frac{1}{4}}{14}$ One o'clock, <i>3.0.0</i>
_____ . . . . Two o'clock,	_____ $\frac{1}{2}$ past 5 o'clock,
_____ . . . . Five o'clock.	

N B This last Train, on the Manchester Market Days, (Tuesdays and Saturdays,) will leave Manchester at Six o'clock instead of Half-past Five.

### SUNDAY.

FIRST CLASS TRAIN . . . . Eight o'clock,	SECOND CLASS TRAIN .. Seven o'clock,
_____ . . . . Five o'clock.	_____ .. Six o'clock.

Part of a leaflet issued by the Liverpool and Manchester  
Railway in 1831.

## THE MACHINE AGE

## I. Communications

(a) *Steamships and Railways.*

THE coming of the Railway produced a vast change in the ordinary habits of man. The first train heralded the era of mechanical motion, and ended the period, lasting from the beginning of history, when man had been able to move over the solid surface of the earth only through the agency of his own limbs or those of an animal. Alike on land, at sea, and now in the air, the Age of Machines has arrived, and with it the Age of Speed.

The first steam-engines were stationary; they were used to pump water out of mines, or to turn the wheels of the powerloom in factories. The latter years of George III saw the invention of the first steam-propelled vehicles. The steamboat came first. In 1787, a Scotsman called William Symington took out a patent for a marine steam-engine; in 1802 one of his boats, the *Charlotte Dundas*, steamed down the Clyde-Forth Canal for nineteen miles, towing two other boats of seventy tons each. Robert Fulton, an American engineer, ran a passenger steamboat on the Hudson river in 1807. Soon after the conclusion of the Napoleonic War, steamboat services were opened between Liverpool and Glasgow, and between Dublin and Holyhead; the cross-Channel steamer service, from Dover to Calais, was opened in 1818.

The steamboat was in general use for short sea journeys by the time that the first passenger train was run. In 1819 the Atlantic Ocean was crossed for the first time by a ship fitted with steam-engines, the *Savannah*, though she did most of the voyage under sail. The first ship to cross the Atlantic using steam the whole way was the Canadian *Royal William*, which made the voyage from Pictou, Nova Scotia, to London in 21 days in 1833. A few years later, I. K. Brunel, the builder of the G.W. Railway, designed a ship called the *Great Western*,

which steamed from Bristol to New York in thirteen days; the *Great Western* made regular voyages to America till 1846. The first ocean steamers fitted with screw propellers were built in Britain from about this time. The great ocean lines—the Cunard (founded in 1838 by Samuel Cunard, a merchant of Nova Scotia), the White Star, the P. & O.—were formed to conduct the passenger and mail traffic from Great Britain to all parts of the world. Comfort and speed have both gone on steadily increasing till we get the magnificent floating palaces of the present day.<sup>1</sup>

The development of the railway followed close upon that of the steamship. One of the first rail locomotives, or 'iron horses', was made (1804) by a Cornishman, Richard Trevithick, whose steam-carriage took a car-load of passengers along a road. It was shortly after this that George Stephenson (1781–1848), the son of a Northumberland collier, produced an engine which carried a load of coals from the pithead to the River Tyne, six miles distant. In 1814 Stephenson made an engine, named the *Blücher* after the Prussian general, which drew a load of thirty tons up an incline at a speed of four miles per hour.

Stephenson now conceived the idea that engines, with carriages attached, might be made to run along railways for any distance. As a result of his inventive genius, he became the instrument by which the Railway Era began in England. He was appointed engineer of the first two railway lines built in this country—the Stockton and Darlington Railway (1825) and the Liverpool and Manchester (1830). Stephenson's engine, which ran on the day of the opening of the Stockton and Darlington Railway, can still be seen at Darlington Station. His other famous engine, the *Rocket* (1829), won the first prize (£500) offered by the promoters of the Liverpool and Manchester Railway;<sup>2</sup> it attained a speed of 30 miles per hour on the day of the opening of the railway. On that day occurred

<sup>1</sup> The *Majestic* (1921), 56,600 tons, crossed the Atlantic in 5 days. The *Queen Mary* (1936), 73,000 tons, crossed from New York to Cherbourg in 4 days 15 hours, and her average speed was 28.74 knots.

<sup>2</sup> 'This infernal nuisance—the locomotive Monster, carrying eighty tons of goods, and navigated by a tail of smoke and sulphur, coming through every man's grounds between Manchester and Liverpool.' (*The Creevey Papers.*)

the first railway accident, when Huskisson, the statesman, was knocked down while crossing the line to shake hands with the Duke of Wellington; and the *Rocket* carried him, a dying man, to hospital.

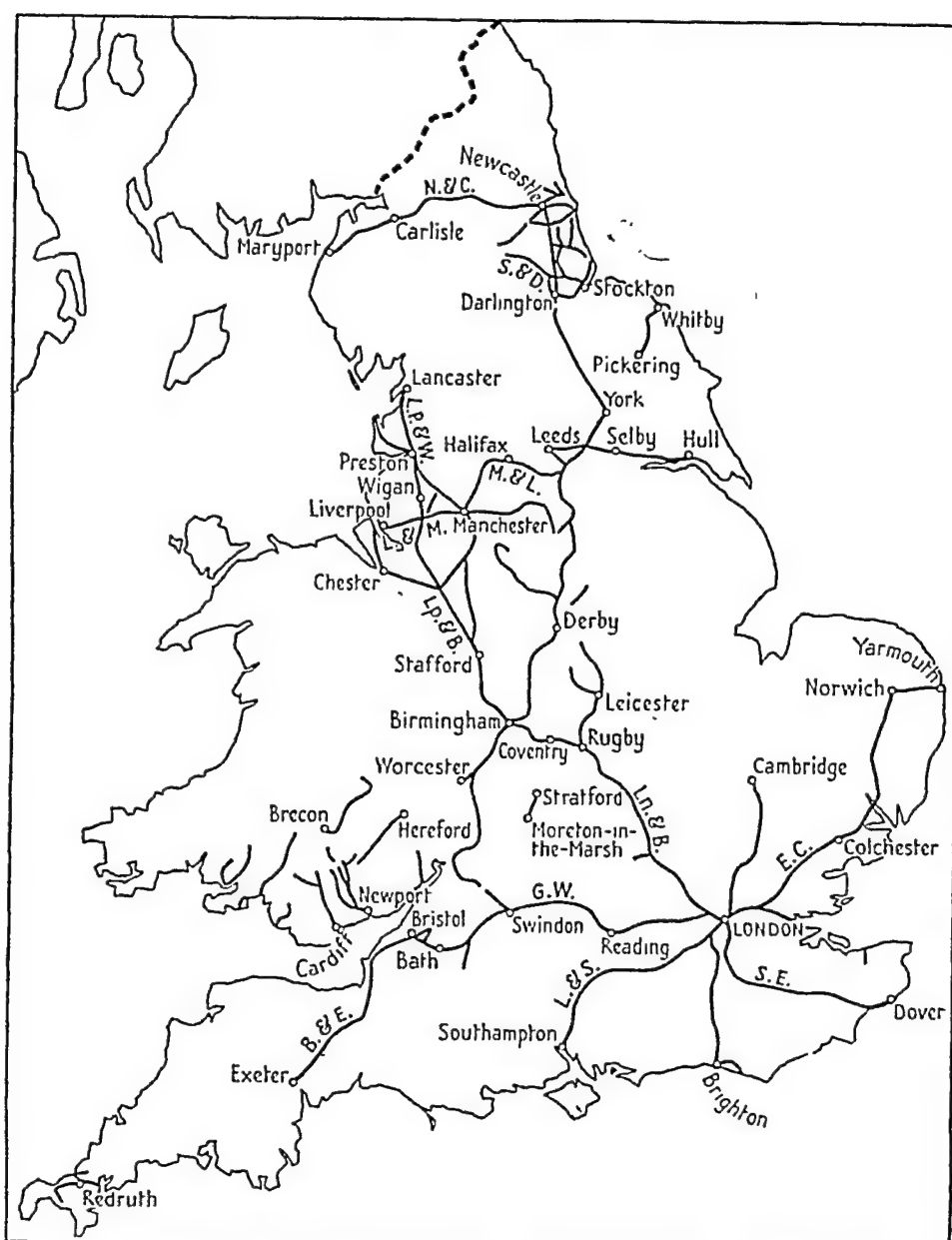
George Stephenson was the engineer of five other railway lines which were opened in Lancashire and the north midlands, connecting Birmingham with the manufacturing towns of the north. His son, Robert Stephenson (1803-59), built the London and Birmingham Railway (1838), which was afterwards joined with other older lines to form the London and North-Western Railway (1846), with its head-quarters at Euston. Robert Stephenson also designed the Menai Straits Railway Bridge. Next to the Stephensons, the greatest engineer of the railways was I. K. Brunel (1806-59), who designed Clifton Suspension Bridge and laid the main line of the G.W.R. from Paddington to Bristol (1838-41). The Great Western line, as first laid down by Brunel, operated on a broad gauge of 7 feet, which he considered very suitable for passenger traffic. But eventually the Great Western came into line with the other railways and abandoned the broad gauge. All British railways are now built on a gauge of 4 feet 8½ inches.

The first railways were designed to compete with the canals, i.e. to carry coals and other heavy goods from the colliery or factory to the ports. But, when the possibilities of speed by steam-locomotion became evident, it was seen that the railway train would be able also to compete with the stage-coach. There were plenty of people ready to scoff at this notion, since it was thought that, even if a greater speed than that of the stage-coach were possible, it would be far too dangerous. However, before many years, the railway engine was running safely at fifty miles an hour, and the stage-coach was driven out of existence. There was a good deal of selfish or ignorant opposition to the building of the railways, chiefly by those interested in coaches, road toll-bridges, canals, and the preservation of parks. When Brunel, who was a fine engineer, built his first railway bridges, people said they would fall down. When he built his famous Box Tunnel, 3,193 yards long, between Bath and Chippenham, it was said that no one would be foolish enough to endanger his life by entering it.

Robert  
Stephenson

Brunel

Opposition  
to the  
railways



ENGLAND AND WALES: RAILWAYS IN 1844

N. and C.—Newcastle and Carlisle  
 S. and D.—Stockton and Darlington  
 L. P. and W.—Lancaster, Preston and Wigan  
 L. and M.—Liverpool and Manchester  
 M. and L.—Manchester and Leeds  
 Lp. and B.—Liverpool and Birmingham

Ln. and B.—London and Birmingham  
 E. C.—Eastern Counties  
 G. W.—Great Western  
 S. E.—South Eastern  
 L. and S.—London and Southampton  
 B. and E.—Bristol and Exeter



The arrangements made for the comfort of passengers at first left much to be desired. The first-class passengers rode in covered carriages, with glass windows, and these comforts were afterwards extended to the second class; but the third class rode in what we should now consider cattle-trucks. *Punch* in 1846 brought out some 'Rules for Railways' which included the following: 'No Third Class carriage is to contain more than a foot of water in wet weather; but, to prevent accidents, corks and swimming belts should always be kept in open carriages.' Bradshaw's first railway time-table was issued in 1841. By Peel's Railway Passengers' Act (1844) every railway had to run a certain number of trains, and passengers were to be charged only a penny a mile.

All the present British railways were originally built by small companies, serving limited local areas.<sup>1</sup> For example, the original Great Western line went only as far as Bristol; the present line to Penzance was built by four other companies. These and other small companies were afterwards taken over by the Great Western; and a similar process of amalgamation created the seven or eight chief railways which existed in Britain before the Great War.<sup>2</sup> The great boom in railways occurred in the 'forties of the last century; between 1845 and 1847, £150,000,000 was invested in railways, though the shares had fallen to half their nominal value by 1849. Railways were a good investment, but the 'railway mania' of 1845 led to over-much speculation.

The usefulness of railways has been enormous.<sup>3</sup> They have greatly increased the speed at which business can be transacted, and they have made possible the quick distribution of goods, especially food, throughout the country. In a country

<sup>1</sup> See the map on the opposite page, where the names of some of the more important companies are given. The map is taken from a contemporary railway map, published by the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge.

<sup>2</sup> Reduced, in 1921, to four.

<sup>3</sup> Note the later world-wide spread of railways: Union Pacific across U.S.A. (1869); Canadian Pacific Railway (1888); Trans-Siberian, Moscow to Vladivostok (1891); Buenos Aires to Valparaiso (1910); the projected Berlin to Baghdad; Cape to Cairo (projected by Cecil Rhodes, not yet completed).

which cannot feed itself, but imports most of its food from abroad, this is especially important. Trains have made it possible to feed the vast population of modern London with fresh milk daily; trains distribute fresh sea-fish to the most remote inland towns. They have made postal services rapid, cheap, and efficient; trains, again, have brought holidays to millions of town-dwellers, who otherwise would never have left their own district; Blackpool and Margate are the creation of the railways. Excursion trains, and other cheap travel arrangements, have created the holiday habit, and the travel habit, among almost all classes of the community. But they have their disadvantages, which were strongly felt during the early days of excursion trains. The then Vice-Chancellor of Cambridge University wrote as follows to the Railway Company concerned:

'The Vice-Chancellor of the University of Cambridge presents his compliments to the Directors of the Eastern Counties Railway and begs to inform them that he has learnt with regret that it is the intention of the Directors of the Eastern Counties Railway to run excursion trains to Cambridge on the Lord's Day, with the object of attracting foreigners and undesirable characters to the University of Cambridge on that sacred day. The Vice-Chancellor of the University of Cambridge wishes to point out to the Directors of the Eastern Counties Railway that such a proceeding would be as displeasing to Almighty God as it is to the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Cambridge.'

(b) *Posts and Telegraphs.*

Posts have been a Government monopoly in England since the reign of James I. At the time of the Napoleonic War the Government used its monopoly to levy a tax on letters, which, however, did not bring in as much as was expected owing to the practice of smuggling letters through private travellers. Nevertheless, the tax was retained until the beginning of Victoria's reign.<sup>1</sup> It was then that Rowland Hill, one of the great benefactors of the century, suggested a penny postage for all letters

<sup>1</sup> In 1837 it was found that five-sixths of the correspondence between Manchester and London evaded the Post Office.

in the United Kingdom, regardless of distance. The Government took up the suggestion, and introduced penny postage in 1840. In May of that year the famous black penny stamp, bearing Queen Victoria's head, was issued. As stamp collectors know, Britain's example was soon copied by every country in the world, civilized and uncivilized. The penny postage was retained in Britain till the Great War, when it was raised to 2*d.*; after the War it was lowered to 1½*d.*

Rowland  
Hill,  
inventor  
of Penny  
Postage  
1840

The history of the transport of mails falls into three main divisions<sup>1</sup>—the periods, respectively, of the pack-horse (c. 1600–1750), the mail-coach (c. 1750–1850), and the railway (from 1850). The penny post was introduced just as the era of the mail-coach was giving way before the railway boom. Our postal service is, therefore, a by-product of the Machine Age, since it depends on a good train service for its proper working. Rowland Hill was himself a chairman of a railway company—the London and Brighton. He was also partly responsible for the introduction of another mechanical boon—the electric telegraph.

Like many scientific inventions, the telegraph was the product of the work of several different inventors. When Volta in 1800 made the first electric battery that would give a steady electric current, inventors were soon busy experimenting with it to send telegraph signals along wires. In 1837 Sir C. Wheatstone made the earliest practical telegraph used in this country. Soon the telegraph and the railway were spreading together throughout the world. The year 1851 was a landmark in telegraph history, for in that year the first electric cable was laid from Dover to Calais, and Reuter's News Agency was established in London. From that time the telegraph became the normal means by which news was sent to the publishing offices of the great London dailies.

The  
Telegraph

News

Unlike the posts, the telegraph was not at first a Government monopoly. Two large private companies, and several smaller ones, were responsible for the installation of the telegraph in Britain. Then, in 1868, Parliament decided to take over all the lines (except those used by railways for their own purposes), paying the companies eleven million pounds com-

<sup>1</sup> The Air Mail (London–Paris) dates from 1919.

pensation. A uniform charge for inland telegrams was then introduced.

The laying of the first Atlantic cable from Ireland to Newfoundland, completed in 1868 by Cyrus Field after several heroic failures, opened up telegraphic communication with America. Since then cables have been laid to all parts of the world. Like the first inland lines, the cables were put down by private companies. Most of them are still owned by British and American firms, though a few lines have been acquired by the British Government.<sup>1</sup>

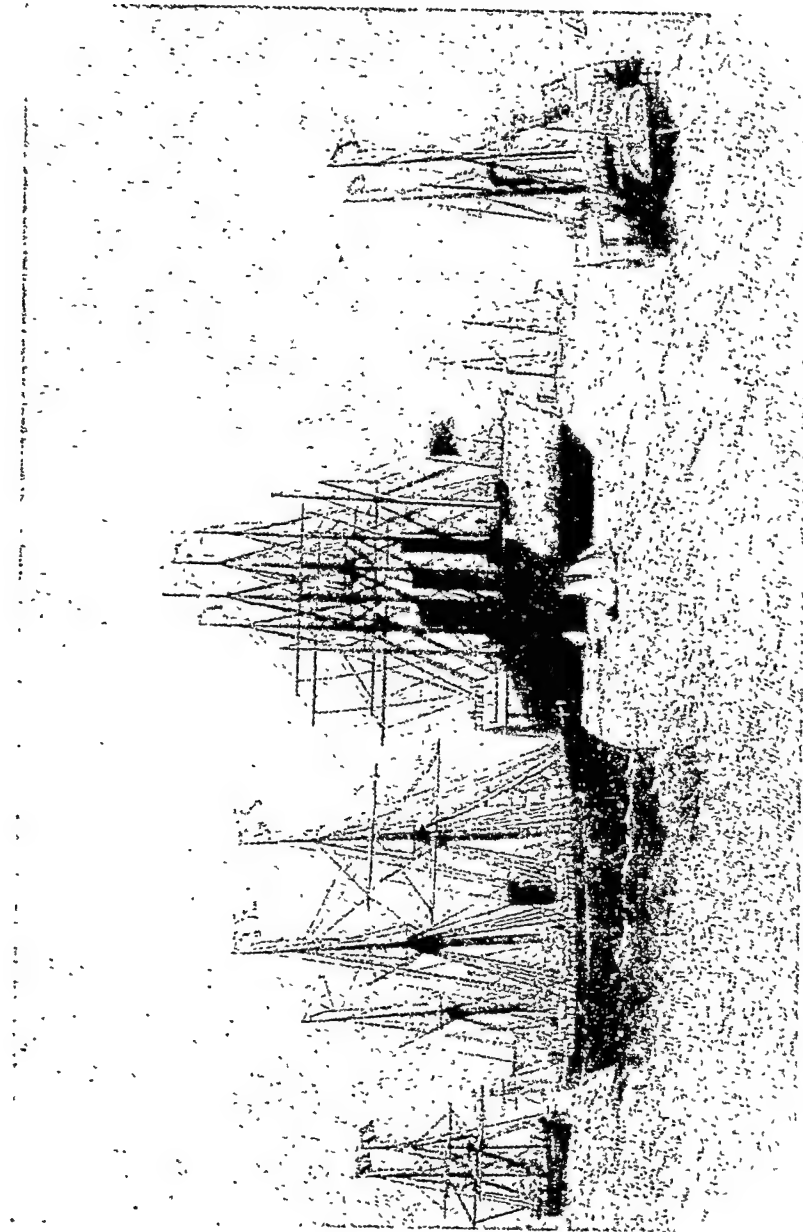
## 2. *The Machine in Industry*

Until the present century, when the god of Speed began to claim his daily toll of victims, the machine effected a revolution in the realm of transport which was all to the good. Railways and telegraphs have certainly been an almost unmixed blessing. Far different is the tale of the machine in industry; and it is arguable that machines, and the factories which house them, have enslaved as many people as they have benefited. The mechanization of industry has gone on uninterruptedly for a century and a half; it is a vast subject, which can only be briefly touched on here.

Modern industry has three main characteristics: it is worked by one form or another of mechanical power; the machines are tended by people assembled in factories; and the factories are owned by capitalists who provide the money for establishing and maintaining them. It follows that, whenever and wherever this system was introduced, both the small manufacturer and the 'household' worker (i.e. one who plied his trade independently of a capitalist employer, in his own cottage, not a factory) would disappear. At the present day, we can see the small tradesman's shop disappearing before the advance of the large multiple 'store'. The same kind of thing was happening a century ago in industry; the small manufacturer gave way to the factory owner, with his new machines and his 'factory-hands' to tend them.

The change from the old pre-machine world to the world of

<sup>1</sup> For the later development of telegraphy, the telephone, and wireless, see Chapters XLI and XLV.



#### COMMUNICATIONS IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

The *Great Eastern* at Brest in 1869, ready to begin laying the French Atlantic Telegraph. Notice that the ships are equipped with sails and steam, and the *Great Eastern* herself has paddles (see pp. 759-760).

Gradual  
change to  
factory  
system

factories was a very gradual process; it took some time to operate in any one industry, nor did all industries change at the same time. In 1815, the only industry in which the factory system was fully established was that of cotton. The woollen industry, which was far older, clung to older methods. It was not easy to introduce machinery in two of the three chief areas of the woollen industry, the West of England and East Anglia, both of which were without coal-fields. But gradually trade ebbed away from Norfolk and the Cotswolds, while the wool trade became firmly established in the third of the old areas, the only one where coal was plentiful—the West Riding of Yorkshire. By 1850 power-driven machinery had been introduced in all the textile trades—the Yorkshire wool trade, the Nottingham lace trade, and the Leicestershire hosiery trade. A similar change also took place, about the same time or rather later, in the hardware trades, centred in Birmingham and Sheffield.

The two key-industries of this new machine world were mining and engineering. The factories depended on two things, apart from the human element—machines to do the work, and Coal coal to provide the motive power. Hence the coal trade flourished throughout the nineteenth century, and so did the companion iron and steel trade, which provided the material for making the machines. And the making of steel tools and machinery created an entirely new industry, that of engineering. The modern world lives by machinery, and the engineer is the master of that world. Mechanics were, from the first, better paid than the ordinary factory hands, and theirs has always been skilled work. They were probably the only members of the working-classes to whom the Machine Age in its earlier stages was less of a curse than a blessing.

Engineer-  
ing

Defects of  
the early  
Machine  
Age

There is much to regret in the passing of the old artistic craftsmanship, with its centuries-old traditions, which flourished in the pre-machine world. The ideal that simple things of everyday use should be well and artistically made was one that was afterwards to disappear, in the rush of the new age whose watchword was Quantity (mass production), not Quality. Again, ugliness and a blackened countryside were too often the accompaniments of the early Machine Age. Yet this need not be so. It is no longer necessary for the coming of an industry

to ruin the appearance of a countryside; even smoke may one day be banished from the world. Nor have we by any means exhausted the possibilities of machinery; the machine may yet be made to serve the interests of art, as it already has served the interests of speedy transport and quick production.

### 3. *The Human Problem*

The change to the new conditions of labour was often resented by the workers themselves, who were the first to suffer in an age of transition, which meant loss of their old employment. The so-called Luddite Riots (1810-20), which broke out at intervals during the years just before and after Waterloo, were an indication of the popular discontent. Machine-breaking was a characteristic of the Luddite Riots, which were named after a half-witted lad, Ned Ludd, who was supposed to have revenged himself on his master in this fashion. Luddite riots at Nottingham (1811-12) were suppressed by calling out the troops. But rioting could not stop the progress of invention, though invention at first brought, not increased happiness, but distress.

Luddite  
Riots  
1810-20

The factory system contained most of the defects of the old domestic or household system which it supplanted, and added others. Hours had always been long; cottages, where work used to be done, had always been crowded and insanitary; workmen had always employed small children to help in weaving and spinning. The new factories also brought long hours of work in unhealthy conditions to men, women, and children. But now the country was shut out; the people were crowded into the mills, to remain during the hours of daylight in the foul air and amid the whirr of machinery. It was the scale on which the thing was done that was new; and it was this that first aroused the attention of reformers.

Old and  
new systems  
compared

On no part of the community did the tyranny of mill-life press harder than on the children. Child labour was useful because it was cheap, and because children could be employed in the comparatively easy task of minding the machines. At first, the children of paupers were employed, and then simply turned adrift when they reached the age of sixteen or seventeen. Then, under pressure of poverty, the weavers began to

Child  
labour

send their own children to the mill. Hard, indeed, was the lot of these wretched little ones. Dragged from their beds in the early hours of the morning, they had to work from 5 or 6 a.m. to 7 or 8 p.m. with perhaps two half-hours off for meals. They were subjected to cruel beatings, for the overseers resorted to violence, not merely to get them to work but to keep them awake. We must remember that these were the days when boys were regularly thrashed at public schools for trivial offences. Still, the long hours, the stifling atmosphere, the monotonous work, the lack of sleep, all go to make up a sad picture for children of five or six. Yet many mill-owners defended the system, denied that it was cruel, and thought it was excellent discipline for the children. It is recorded that a West Indian slave-owner once met some Yorkshire mill-owners and compared notes with them. He admitted that his own slave system was hard, but said he had never contemplated employing small children from dawn to dusk at so monotonous a toil.

Early  
Factory  
Acts  
1802-19 A few employers were honest enough to admit the evils of the employment of children. Among them was Sir Robert Peel (father of the statesman), himself a cotton mill-owner. It was through his efforts that the first Factory Act (1802) was passed through Parliament. By this Act, the employment of apprentices (i.e. pauper children) was limited to twelve hours per day. The Act further empowered local justices to appoint two visitors (a magistrate and a clergyman) to visit the mills. In 1819 the Cotton Factories Regulation Act (applying only to cotton mills) fixed twelve working hours as the limit for all children, and forbade the employment of children under nine. Even such small improvements as these were fiercely opposed, the masters objecting to the interference with their liberty, or with the 'liberty' of parents to employ their children as they wished. The early Factory Acts were not enforced, since those whose business it should have been to enforce them were not interested in the problem. But it led to the resumption of State Control of industry.<sup>1</sup>

Employers of a hundred years ago must have been men with hard heads and harder hearts. There were exceptions,

<sup>1</sup> See below, p. 807.



UNDER THE SUPERINTENDENCE OF THE SOCIETY FOR  
THE DIFFUSION OF USEFUL KNOWLEDGE.

THE  
WORKING-MAN'S COMPANION.

THE  
RESULTS OF MACHINERY,  
HARVEST,  
CHEAP PRODUCTION  
AND

INCREASED EMPLOYMENT, EXHIBITED:

BY  
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1831.



TWO VIEWS ABOUT MACHINES

*Left*, a cartoon of 1812 showing the leader of the Luddites disguised as a woman.

*Right*, the title-page of a publication of 1831.

Robert Owen however, and the most remarkable exception was Robert Owen (1771-1858). Owen was a Welshman who had risen in the world by his own exertions and remarkable business ability. At thirty he was manager and part proprietor of some cotton mills at New Lanark on the Clyde. At New Lanark, Owen proved that it was possible to make a factory pay, and at the same time to treat the workpeople as decent human beings. When he came to New Lanark he found dirt, dishonesty, and drunkenness, and a spirit of hostility towards all masters. Owen believed that a man's character is formed by his surroundings. He therefore set himself to improve the conditions of labour, paying good wages for shorter hours, and trying to improve housing conditions too. In time he found that the men became changed characters; his kindly attitude had won their confidence, and the mill became a cheerful place. Then Owen turned to the children, who he insisted must be trained in good habits from infancy. There were to be no punishments in the school Owen set up. Contrast this school, inspired only by care for the children's welfare, with the factories all over Britain—the only schools for the majority of poor children. People came from all over Europe to see Owen's model school and model mill. Visitors were impressed, but other mill-owners were too ignorant or too conservative to imitate Owen's example. His was a voice crying in the wilderness.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> For another great pioneer in Factory Reform, Lord Shaftesbury, see below, pp. 807-10.

## XXXVI

### AFTER WATERLOO (1815-30)

#### I. Cobbett's England

THE conclusion of the Napoleonic War found Great Britain the unchallenged mistress of the world's seas, and among the first of the Great Powers of Europe. At the same time, the work of her inventors and mechanics, coupled with her great natural resources in coal, had put her easily ahead of all foreign competitors in the industrial era which was just beginning. In spite of these facts—in spite of her political power and her industrial wealth—Britain was unhappy; the forty years after Waterloo was a time of much wretchedness for the mass of the people of these islands.

There were several reasons for this unhappy state of affairs. It was an age of transition from one type of economic life to another, and so great a change inevitably brought hardships. It was seen, in the last chapter, how the introduction of machinery was accompanied by much misery, both for the workers and for their children. But it must be remembered that the country was passing through not one but *two* economic revolutions, which culminated at the same time. The beginning of the Industrial Revolution upset the old-established way of life, but the Agricultural Revolution upset it no less profoundly. The system of Enclosures was then working, or had already worked, a silent change in English village life.<sup>1</sup> The smallholder could not afford to pay for the cost of enclosures. Either he drifted to the town, there to swell the already large army of unemployed, or he remained in his native village as a farm labourer, striving to bring up a family on 8s. a week. To such a condition had many of the once-thriving peasantry of England sunk that an indignant observer (in 1825) noted 'the house, with rotten thatch, broken windows, rotten door-sills' which remained as 'the dwelling of a half-starved and ragged family of labourers, the grandchildren, perhaps, of a decent

<sup>1</sup> See above, Chapter XXX, for Enclosures.

family of small farmers that formerly lived happily in this very house'.<sup>1</sup> Some yeomen of course prospered, and became leaseholders in the country or manufacturers in the towns; the Peel family, for example, was of yeoman stock.

In addition to these main causes of disturbance in the labour market, the period immediately following Waterloo brought difficulties of its own. Peace, which was supposed to bring plenty, had brought instead worse distress. Half a million men, ex-soldiers and sailors, suddenly became unemployed, and sought work among a community which had no further need for their services. Steel and iron workers, gunsmiths, food contractors, and clothiers—all suffered from the coming of peace. At the same time, thousands of farmers went bankrupt, owing to the competition of imported foreign corn. The British Government—under Lord Liverpool (1812-27)—and the British Parliament took no steps to regulate the economic distress of the time. They who had struck down Napoleon in his might, and who were prepared to dictate terms to the Powers of Europe, had no notion of how to deal with the ills of their own country. To interfere with, still less to regulate, the 'economic laws' which determined the nation's life—this was not thought to be the duty of statesmanship.

Parliament in 1815 was a Parliament of landowners, and landowners were dependent on farmers who could pay their rents. After the first downfall of Napoleon (1813-14) and the collapse of his Continental System,<sup>2</sup> German and other foreign corn began to come into Britain. The price of British corn fell rapidly. British farmers suffered in consequence, and many were ruined. In 1815, therefore, Parliament passed a Corn Law, which stated that no foreign corn should be imported into this country until British corn reached the price of 80s. a quarter.<sup>3</sup> Thus the British farmer was artificially protected from foreign

<sup>1</sup> Cobbett, *Rural Rides*.

<sup>2</sup> See above, Chap. XXXII.

<sup>3</sup> The 1815 Corn Law was amended several times. In 1828 the Wellington Government introduced a sliding scale—a series of graduated duties which rose as the price of British corn fell. Peel, in 1842, altered the scale, and repealed the Corn Laws altogether four years later. See below, p. 817.

competition. But the price of the quartern loaf rose from 10d. to 1s. 2d. at a time when the ordinary farm labourer was earning only 8s. a week. It should be remembered that, with a population of 19 millions for Great Britain and Ireland, it was still just possible to feed the United Kingdom with British-grown corn, though it became less and less possible as the years went by and the population steadily increased.

A large proportion of the people of England in 1815 lived in actual poverty. Under the Speenhamland system<sup>1</sup> the parish rates had to make up to the labouring population the deficiencies in wages. But, even so, parish relief was often insufficient to keep a labouring family from starving. The Game Laws preserved the well-stocked estates, swarming with pheasants, partridges, and hares, for the use of the owners, and visited with ferocious punishments the poacher who was caught. In 1816 a law was passed punishing with seven years' transportation any man found *in possession* of a net for taking rabbits. Poor Law  
Game Laws

The Game Laws are a fair example of the criminal code which disgraced the Statute-Book in 1815. More than 200 offences, mostly forms of stealing, were punishable by death. True, the juries refused to convict for such crimes as stealing apples, so that many of the so-called crimes received no punishment. But the actual results were bad enough. Sir James Mackintosh, who devoted a large part of his life to the question of the criminal code and its reform, told the House of Commons in 1818 that 101 persons had suffered the death penalty for forgery alone in the last seven years. Seventy-five thousand persons were transported to Botany Bay<sup>2</sup> between 1787 and 1836, some, no doubt, for serious crimes, but many for offences such as sheep-stealing. The record of crime mounted up after the end of the war. In 1805 only 4,600 persons were committed for trial of whom 2,700 were convicted; in 1819, 14,000 persons were committed and 9,500 convicted. The Penal Code

England in 1815 presented a sad spectacle—decaying villages, widespread poverty, ignorance, dirt, and disease, both in the old country villages and in the new ugly towns of the industrial north. For all this the rulers of England had no

<sup>1</sup> See above, Chapter XXX, and below, Chapter XXXVII.

<sup>2</sup> See above, p. 750.

remedy to offer, save repression of all would-be reformers. Fear derived from the French Revolution, memories of the guillotine, still played a dominant part in the minds of the aristocracy of England.

The cry for reform, which had been smothered during the Napoleonic War, gradually grew more insistent. There were various kinds of reform, each of which had its own particular advocates. The followers of Wilberforce still pressed for the Abolition of Slavery; men like Sir Samuel Romilly and Sir James Mackintosh devoted themselves to pressing the reform of the criminal code on a reluctant Parliament. Others like Francis Place, the London tailor, agitated for the repeal of the Combination Laws, which made workmen's trades unions illegal; others, again, pressed for the relaxation of the laws against Roman Catholics. But one and all were united in their demand for the reform of Parliament itself, for it was rightly felt that the old unreformed Parliament was the root of most of the evils of the time. Change the constitution of Parliament, and the laws would soon be changed too.

In the years following Waterloo, the Radical party was gradually formed in England. It was hardly represented in the aristocratic, landowning Parliament, but it had a vigorous following outside the walls of Westminster. Its chief leaders were Major Cartwright, who went about founding 'Hampden Clubs' for radicals and republicans, Thistlewood, who afterwards took to more desperate courses, and Hunt, the mob-orator. But the man who, more than any one else, influenced the advanced thought of that generation was Jeremy Bentham, who was already sixty-seven in 1815. Bentham had been early trained in legal studies, and he regarded the whole structure of English society with the precise mind of a lawyer. His test question, with regard to any law or institution was: What is the use of it? Examined by this standard, Bentham found that many laws ought to be abolished, and many institutions reformed. His *Catechism of Parliamentary Reform* (1817) exposed the absurdities of the existing system of representation, and argued that a more democratic form of government would help to produce the 'greatest happiness of the greatest number'. This book had a considerable effect on thinking people; and

Bentham's arguments did much to bring about the gradual reform of English institutions.

Bentham influenced the thinkers of his day; the man who stirred the masses was William Cobbett (1762-1835). A Surrey Cobbett man of peasant stock, Cobbett had passed his youth in the Army, where he rose to the rank of sergeant-major. At one time a supporter of Pitt, he turned, about the time of that statesman's death, into a bitter opponent of the Government and of the landed interest. His newspaper, the *Political Register*, first issued in 1802, became the main organ of Radical opinion in England. In 1816, Cobbett published his paper at 2d. instead of 1s. 0½d.; he avoided the stamp duty on newspapers by omitting all items of news.<sup>1</sup> The paper was widely sold, and often read aloud to the illiterate masses.

Cobbett had an exceptional command of terse, vigorous English; he had also an exceptional capacity for hatred. He hated the landowners and clergy, because he said they impoverished the people by rents and tithes; he hated manufacturers, because they were depopulating his beloved countryside; and he hated rotten-borough owners, because they controlled the whole system, as represented by an unreformed Parliament. Cobbett lumped all the objects of his hatred together and called them 'The Thing'. How intensely he loathed 'The Thing' can be read in his *Rural Rides*, his description of journeys on horseback through southern England. Cobbett hated towns, which he called wens—London was the Great Wen—as he believed them to be sucking the life-blood out of the country. Watch him pass through Wiltshire and enter a couple of towns which were also rotten boroughs . . . 'I could not come through that villainous hole, Calne, without cursing Corruption at every step. . . . In about 10 miles more, I came to another rotten-hole, called Wootton Bassett. This also is a mean, vile place, though the country all round it is very fine.'

Another violent hater of the existing system was the poet Shelley, who, in the three or four years following Waterloo, Shelley issued a number of political poems, most of them inciting the (1792-1822)

<sup>1</sup> The Government countered this by its Newspaper Stamp Duty Act. See below, p. 780.

English people to rise against their masters. Shelley's generous soul burned with rage at the spectacle of so much unhappiness all around him; he would have welcomed a revolution, as we can see in his 'Men of England':

Men of England, wherefore plough  
For the lords who lay you low?  
Wherefore weave with toil and care  
The rich robes your tyrants wear?

Wherefore, Bees of England, forge  
Many a weapon, chain, and scourge,  
That these stingless drones may spoil  
The forced produce of your toil?

## 2. *Castlereagh* (1812-22)

The rule of Lord Liverpool, which lasted fifteen years (1812-27) was divided into two periods: the ascendancy of Lord <sup>The</sup> Castlereagh (ten years), and the ascendancy of George Can- <sup>Liverpool</sup> ning (five years). Anthony Jenkinson, who had been raised to <sup>Ministry</sup> the earldom of Liverpool during the war, was not remarkable <sup>1812-27</sup> for any statesmanlike quality, except the power of holding a difficult Cabinet together and of managing the House of Commons. His first Ministry (1812-22) saw the great triumph over Napoleon, the Treaty of Vienna, and the period of disorder and distress following the peace. The attitude of the Government throughout this period was one of uncompromising repression; the cry of Reform was not suffered to be heard. Liverpool reconstructed the Ministry in 1822, on Castlereagh's death, when, as we shall see, it took on a more liberal character.

The four chief ministers during the earlier period were Lord <sup>Castlereagh,</sup> Castlereagh, the Duke of Wellington (from 1819), Lord Eldon, <sup>Wellington,</sup> and Lord Sidmouth. The first two were largely responsible <sup>Eldon,</sup> for the overthrow of Napoleon, and played their part in the <sup>Sidmouth</sup> resettlement of Europe which followed;<sup>1</sup> but, as Castlereagh was by far the strongest man in the Cabinet, he was given credit for all its misdeeds—a fact which prevented his countrymen from appreciating his great services to Europe. Lord Eldon, the Lord Chancellor, stood for reaction at its

<sup>1</sup> See above, Chapter XXXII, and Section 5, below.



worst; Sidmouth,<sup>1</sup> the Home Secretary, was entrusted with carrying out most of the repressive acts of the Government.

In 1816 the Government announced that the Income Tax, which had been introduced as a war measure, would be reduced from a 10 to a 5 per cent. tax. Brougham, a Whig leader, who imagined that the Income Tax was an unwarrantable interference with British liberty, raised an agitation for its complete withdrawal. The Commons supported Brougham and the Government weakly gave way. Hence Britain was denied the most obvious and useful method of reducing her enormous debt—860 million pounds,<sup>2</sup> nearly all incurred by the expenses of the late war.

Meanwhile, the state of the country was alarming the Ministry. There was much rick-burning and machine-breaking; Radical agitation was very active. In November 1816 there was a large Radical meeting in Spa Fields, London, which was broken up by the authorities. Early in 1817 a window of the royal coach was shattered by a shot or stone aimed at it. The occupant of the coach was George, Prince of Wales, and Prince Regent of Great Britain for the last ten years (1810-20) of his father's life; for George III was now mad, blind, and deaf. Few princes have been more deservedly despised by their subjects than this Prince Regent. But stones thrown at the royal coach were a sign, the Ministers thought, of a widespread disaffection. In 1817, therefore, they suspended the Habeas Corpus Act. At the same time they passed the Seditious Meetings Act, which required that licences should be obtained from magistrates before public meetings were held.

While seriously disturbed by the activities of the Radicals, the Government was further alarmed by the news that a large body of men were marching from Manchester to lay their grievances before their rulers. These unfortunates were known as the Blanketeers, because each man carried a blanket to sleep in. Sidmouth caused their leaders to be arrested; the march broke up, and the men got no farther than Derbyshire.

<sup>1</sup> Held office as Prime Minister—as Dr. Addington—between Pitt's two ministries.

<sup>2</sup> The National Debt was 860 millions in 1815, 650 millions in 1914, and 7,800 millions in 1920.

But the Ministry had not heard the last of Manchester. In 1819 came Peterloo. A very large meeting—50,000 to 80,000 people assembled in St. Peter's Fields, Manchester, to listen to Orator' Hunt. The local Manchester Yeomanry, trying to keep order, got itself entangled in the mob. Believing the yeomanry to be in danger, the magistrates ordered the regular troops to charge. The result was a dreadful stampede, in which 11 persons were killed and about 500 wounded so badly that they had to be taken to hospital. The Manchester 'Massacre', nicknamed Peterloo in mockery of Waterloo, aroused considerable indignation in the country. But the Government, without waiting to discover whether the magistrates had acted wisely or not, wrote to congratulate them on their action. The fact that the victims were quite unarmed, and had assembled for a peaceful purpose, provoked much sympathy for them.<sup>1</sup>

The Government's main concern was to enforce discipline, and for this purpose they passed the Six Acts later in 1819. Of these Acts,<sup>2</sup> the first two forbade all unauthorized military training, and empowered magistrates to search private houses for arms. The Seditious Meetings Act made the assembling of more than fifty persons illegal; this Act was in force for five years. The Blasphemous and Seditious Libels Act, which is still in force, was intended to curb the freedom of the press, while the Newspaper Stamp Duties Act was aimed particularly at Cobbett, and imposed a duty of 4*d.* on all cheap pamphlets, whether they contained 'news' or not.

The general effect of the Six Acts was to curb the power of the popular press, and to make popular assemblies illegal. The passing of this legislation drove some of the Radicals to desperate courses. Thistlewood and others formed a plot—the Cato Street Conspiracy—to murder the whole Cabinet one evening while they were at dinner. The plot was betrayed, the Cabinet saved, and the conspirators executed; this failure did much to discredit the extreme Radicals.

<sup>1</sup> See Carlyle, *Past and Present*, chap. 3.

<sup>2</sup> The Six Acts were: (1) Prevention of Unauthorized Military Training. (2) Seizure of Arms. (3) Misdemeanours. (4) Seditious Meetings. (5) Blasphemous and Seditious Libels. (6) Newspaper Stamp Duties.

Just before the discovery of the Cato Street Conspiracy, the reign of George III came to an end. Shelley in 1818 had written of

Death of  
George III  
1820

An old, mad, blind, despised and dying King—  
Princes, the dregs of their dull race, who flow  
Through public scorn,—mud from a muddy spring—

and, when death at last removed the pitiful figure of the third George, the nation accepted, with little enthusiasm, the transformation of the Prince Regent into King George IV. Thackeray has poured out all the scorn of which his pen was capable on this miserable man,<sup>1</sup> the selfishness and vanity of whose life had become a byword. He had scarcely ascended the throne, when he involved himself and his Government in a disgraceful scandal. His queen, Caroline of Brunswick, was living apart from him, and George attempted to rid himself of her by divorce. He induced the Government to bring a Divorce Bill for that purpose into the House of Lords. The queen was accused of misconduct and unfaithfulness to her husband, and though these charges may have been true, it was nauseating that they should have been brought by such a man as George IV—himself a man of notoriously evil life. Lord Brougham defended the queen with spirit and success; this fact, together with the agitation outside in the queen's favour, induced the ministers to drop the Bill. Their own part in these unsavoury proceedings added greatly to their unpopularity.

George IV  
(1820-30)

The Royal  
Divorce  
Bill  
1820

In 1822 Lord Castlereagh, the virtual head of the Government, committed suicide. His rival, George Canning, was about to sail for India to take up the duties of Governor-General, but Liverpool at once offered him the Foreign Secretaryship and the leadership of the House of Commons. Canning accepted these posts, and the Government was reconstructed. The rule of the extreme Tories was over, as Canning succeeded Castlereagh, and Sidmouth gave way to Peel. When Castlereagh's body was brought for burial in Westminster Abbey, the populace turned out to see the last of the hated minister. Horrible cheers greeted the funeral procession as it passed through the streets of London.

Death of  
Castlereagh  
1822

<sup>1</sup> Thackeray, *The Four Georges*.

3. *The Tory Reformers* (1822-7)

**Canning** George Canning, the new Foreign Secretary and effective head of the Government, was perhaps the most brilliant man whom that age produced. A man of imperious will and abounding energy, he swept the more hesitating members of the Cabinet off their feet, while his own devoted adherents, mostly younger men, believed him to be the saviour of England. The obliging Lord Liverpool let him have his own way. To the masterful mind of Canning, the state both of England and of Europe called for action. At home he was convinced that the day of reform was, in many matters, long overdue; he carried the Cabinet with him, some with enthusiasm, others reluctantly. In one matter, however, Canning was resolutely opposed to the demands of the Radicals—he did not believe in Parliamentary Reform. He foresaw that it would lead, in time, to democracy, and he disbelieved in democracy; he thought that reforms should be imposed from above. In his dealings with the Powers of Europe, Canning gave a new and more liberal direction to British foreign policy, and he also did much to determine the future relations of Britain and America.<sup>1</sup>

**Peel** Canning's two most prominent supporters in the Cabinet were Robert Peel, who became Home Secretary, and William Huskisson, who became President of the Board of Trade. Peel was the member for Oxford University—in those days the stronghold of reaction, though Peel himself was far from being a reactionary. He was the son of Sir Robert Peel (the first baronet), a Lancashire cotton manufacturer. The elder Peel had made an enormous fortune in cotton, had sent his son to Harrow and Oxford, and marked him out for a political career. Peel belonged, therefore, by birth if not by education, to the new manufacturing classes rather than to the landed aristocracy. His chief work as Home Secretary was to take up from the Government benches the task which men like Romilly and Mackintosh had long been working at—the reform of the penal code. It is noteworthy that Peel wrote to and consulted, not only Mackintosh, but Bentham, who was regarded as the

Reform  
of the  
Penal  
Code  
1823-7

<sup>1</sup> See Section 5 below, for Canning's Foreign Policy.

father of all reform. Peel introduced five statutes abolishing the capital punishment for over 100 offences; before he left office in 1827, nearly 300 Acts, embodying harsh punishments, had been wholly or partially repealed.

William Huskisson, President of the Board of Trade, was an enthusiastic follower of Canning and enjoyed a greater measure of that statesman's confidence than Robinson, the Chancellor of the Exchequer. Both Canning and Huskisson were disciples of Pitt, and set themselves to carry out the economic policy which Pitt had begun, but which the long war had interrupted.<sup>1</sup> Huskisson began by lowering or abolishing tariffs on various imported articles. He was the first minister in the nineteenth century to advocate Free Trade; his reforms, followed up later by those of Peel and Gladstone, continued the swing of the pendulum—begun by Pitt—away from the policy of Protection.<sup>2</sup>

Huskisson

Beginning  
of Free  
Trade  
1823-7

Canning and Huskisson now turned their attention to the colonies. Only a few years before, a minister had declared that the colonies existed solely for Britain's benefit: that she retained a complete monopoly of their trade in return for defending them. This was a defence of the Old Colonial System which had already lost us America, and which the old school of Tories were ready and anxious to continue. But Canning and Huskisson set themselves to overturn the Old Colonial System by altering the economic regulations which governed it. The Navigation Acts—passed under the Commonwealth and Charles II—were still in force in 1822; next year Huskisson considerably modified them.<sup>3</sup> For the first time in history, foreign countries were allowed to trade direct with the British colonies.<sup>4</sup> But trade between Britain and her colonies was still confined to British ships, and could not be carried on in foreign vessels.

The Old  
Colonial  
SystemNavigation  
Laws  
modified  
1823

<sup>1</sup> See above, Chapter XXXI.

<sup>2</sup> Huskisson's changes in the direction of Free Trade came in 1823; the triumph of Free Trade came under Gladstone in the middle of the century.

<sup>3</sup> They were finally repealed in 1849.

<sup>4</sup> It should be borne in mind that Spain and Portugal had just lost their American colonies, the trade of which was thrown open to all the world. See Section 5.

Canning,  
Huskisson,  
and the  
Empire

Huskisson was a man with a vision of the Empire. His policy was a complete denial of the doctrine that the colonies were the chattels of Britain; he encouraged them to believe that their interests and those of Britain were one. He encouraged emigration, and even helped intending colonists with public money. He adopted the system of Colonial Preference, by which the colonies were given preferential treatment in our tariff system as against foreign countries. Colonial Preference lasted until Britain abandoned tariffs altogether (under Gladstone in the 'fifties). By all these means, Huskisson, with Canning's backing, showed that Britain cared for the welfare of the colonies as well as for her own. This policy strengthened the moral bonds between Britain and the colonies, and it entitles Canning and Huskisson to be considered the founders of the Second British Empire—just as Cromwell and Charles II were the founders of the First.

Francis  
Place

Repeal  
of the  
Combina-  
tion Acts  
1824

One important reform of these years was not due to the Government, but to the labours of a remarkable man, a tailor named Francis Place, who devoted the latter part of his life to politics and to social reform. He was a master of the art of collecting evidence in support of his case; and for years he laboured to get the Combination Acts repealed. These Acts, passed by Pitt during the French War (1799, 1800), forbade any combinations of workmen for the purpose of raising their wages, and thus made Trade Unions illegal. Under cover of these laws, the magistrates had, for a quarter of a century, been in the habit of threatening men with imprisonment in order to force them to accept the wages which their masters offered them. There was no pretence of fairness; the men were imprisoned for the slightest infringement of the Combination Acts,<sup>1</sup> but combinations of masters, which were also illegal, were never interfered with. In 1824, Place judged that, now the new ministers were in office, it was a favourable time to get the Acts repealed. He prepared his evidence, got it considered before a Committee of the House of Commons, and

<sup>1</sup> For example, a bootmaker called Alexander had his wages halved, and then refused in conjunction with six others to go to work. All seven were prosecuted under the Combination Acts and sentenced to 14 days' imprisonment with hard labour.

finally (through his friend Hume, a Radical M.P.) had the satisfaction of seeing the Acts abolished (1824). Next year, the Government became nervous, for many strikes had occurred, and brought in another Bill to restrict the action of trade unions. But, by the Act of 1824, trade unions were at least legalized and allowed to exist.

During the five years that Canning was in power, the Old Tories, like Eldon and Wellington, grew more and more restive. In 1827 an event occurred which split the Tory party in two. Lord Liverpool had a paralytic stroke; his mental powers were impaired, and his career was over. George IV offered the Premiership to Canning, who accepted it. Wellington and Eldon at once resigned. Peel, who was in some ways more in sympathy with Canning than the Duke, also resigned, chiefly because he did not wish to see the laws against Roman Catholics repealed, and he knew Canning meant to repeal them. Canning therefore formed a Ministry of his own followers among the Tories—Huskisson became leader of the House of Commons—and some of the Whigs. The official leader of the Whigs, Lord Grey, remained aloof and hostile, from motives of personal dislike. But Canning was dying when he took office and before the summer was over he was dead. The incapable Robinson, late Chancellor of the Exchequer, now Lord Goderich, tried to carry on the Whig-Canningite Ministry, but resigned in a few months; he never met Parliament. The king then sent for the Duke of Wellington, who consented to form a Ministry (January 1828).

End of the  
Liverpool  
Ministry  
1827

Canning  
Prime  
Minister  
(April-  
August  
1827)

Goderich  
Prime  
Minister  
(1827-8)

#### 4. *Wellington* (1828-30)

The Duke of Wellington, whose great reputation had been made on the battlefield, was in some ways the ideal Tory leader. He did not understand the need for reform, and he looked on Radicals and reformers in the manner of a sergeant-major inspecting a squad of awkward recruits. But, in spite of his reactionary tendencies, the Duke was destined to disappoint the High Tories. He was not their servant, and he dared to oppose them if he thought it his duty to do so. The rulers of England in those days were men of spirit. It was once suggested to Canning that he could not govern England

Wellington  
Prime  
Minister  
(1828-30)

without the aid of the aristocracy. Canning haughtily replied: 'I will not act (as I never have acted) as the tool of any confederacy, however powerful.' These words might equally well have been spoken by Wellington, or by Peel.

The Duke began by trying to re-unite the Tories, Old Tories, and Canningites, but it was soon seen that he could not work with the latter; Huskisson and his friends were dismissed within three months. Henceforth the Duke presided over the last ministry of Old Tories that ever ruled England. Huskisson—who was killed by a railway train in 1830—never rejoined them; the other Canningites joined the Whigs, and produced two future Prime Ministers of England—Melbourn and Palmerston.

Wellington's right-hand man was Peel, who again became Home Secretary and leader of the House of Commons. In 1829 he introduced the measure by which, perhaps, he is best remembered. He saw that the growing city of London required a new and better police system, and he therefore founded the Metropolitan Police Force, afterwards extended into the modern police system all over Britain. The new police, armed only with batons, proved equal to their task. Unpopular at first, the Police Force became one of the institutions of which Britain is most justly proud. Peel's police—nicknamed 'Bobbies' or 'Peelers' after him—have succeeded in keeping order, just as his reformed Penal Code has led to a decrease in crime.

One question with which the Duke's ministry was soon confronted was that of the religious inequalities which still existed. In 1828 Lord John Russell, one of the younger Whig leaders, brought in a Bill to repeal the Test and Corporation Acts, passed in Charles II's reign. The Government did not oppose Russell's Bill, which was carried by a large majority. Henceforth the irritating laws forbidding Nonconformists to take up office were removed.<sup>1</sup> But still the Roman Catholics, both in England and Ireland, were refused admittance to the universities, to the Bar, and to Parliament. The situation created by

<sup>1</sup> In practice, an annual Indemnity Act had been passed for many years, relieving Nonconformist office-bearers from the necessity of taking the oath to conform with the ceremonies of the Church of England.



the anti-Catholic laws was merely difficult in England; in Ireland it was desperate.

Before Pitt had passed the Act of Union (1800) between Ireland England and Ireland,<sup>1</sup> he had held out the promise that the laws against Irish Catholics should be repealed, but the action of the king, George III, had caused him to break his promise. For twenty years after the Union, the Irish suffered in silence. Then a Catholic leader arose—Daniel O'Connell, an Irish lawyer. It was O'Connell who founded the Catholic Association to extort justice from the British Government. O'Connell deliberately appealed to the religious passions of his countrymen; he enlisted the help of the priests to band the people together, and to demand justice.

The  
Catholic  
Association  
1823

In 1828, Wellington appointed an Irish Protestant landlord, Mr. Vesey Fitzgerald, President of the Board of Trade. Fitzgerald had to seek re-election—for County Clare—but was opposed by O'Connell himself. Though Fitzgerald was personally popular, O'Connell was elected by the enthusiastic Irish Catholics. But as a Catholic he could not take his seat in the House of Commons—unless the law were altered. The Chief Secretary wrote to Peel saying that the expulsion of O'Connell from the House of Commons would be the signal for a general rising in Ireland; the Lord Lieutenant also wrote to ministers saying that they *might* have time to alter the law 'before we begin to fight'. Wellington hesitated no longer; he decided to alter the law. So, under the threat of revolution, Wellington and Peel passed the Act of Roman Catholic Emancipation (1829) both for England and Ireland. To Peel fell the unpleasant duty of proposing in the Commons the very measure against which he had often spoken in the past. The older Tories, who would not listen to reason, said that the Duke had betrayed his party; they heaped insults on Peel, which that statesman bore in silence.

The Clare  
Election  
1829

Catholic  
Emancipa-  
tion, 1829

The year 1830 was an exciting one, both at home and abroad. The demand for Parliamentary Reform, which the Duke still steadily opposed, grew stronger; Cobbett rode about the country addressing enthusiastic meetings. Then, in June, George IV died unlamented, and was succeeded by his more

Death of  
George IV  
1830

<sup>1</sup> See above, Chapter XXXIII.

William IV  
(1830-7)

popular brother, William IV. The death of the king in those days necessitated a General Election. Before it could be held, news arrived of another revolution in France. Charles X and his reactionary minister, Polignac, had been driven into exile (July 1830), and a more moderate government was set up under King Louis-Philippe (1830-48). Englishmen felt that the time had come for a great change in their own country. Then in August, just as the elections were being held, there was another revolution, this time in Belgium, where the populace rose against their Dutch masters.<sup>1</sup>

French and  
Belgian  
Revolutions  
1830

The Duke  
on Reform

The Duke was not perturbed by this outbreak of revolutions. He met the new Parliament in November. Earl Grey, who had supported the cause of Reform for forty years,<sup>2</sup> rose once more in the House of Lords to suggest an alteration in our Parliamentary system. Wellington replied in a speech which did more credit to his tenacity than to his judgement.

'He was fully convinced (he said) that the country possessed a Legislature which answered all the good purposes of legislation, and this to a greater degree than any legislature ever had answered in any country whatever. He would go further and say that the Legislature and system of representation possessed the full and entire confidence of the country—deservedly possessed that confidence. . . .'

Resignation  
of  
Wellington  
November  
1830

The Duke's Government did not long survive this speech; it was defeated by a combination of the High Tories (whom he had offended over Roman Catholic Emancipation), the Whigs, and the Canningites. The most unpopular man in England in November 1830 was the victor of Waterloo.

Agricultural  
Labourers'  
Revolt  
1830

William IV sent for Earl Grey, who formed a Government composed of Whigs and Canningites. Before the new Government could embark on its work of Reform, however, it was faced with a serious agricultural revolt, which took place at the very moment of the change of ministry (November 1830). In their treatment of this revolt, the Whigs behaved more in the spirit of Eldon and Sidmouth than in that of enlightened reformers. The revolt broke out in Wiltshire, Hampshire, and Dorset, where the wretched labourers, stung to fury at long

<sup>1</sup> See Section 5.

<sup>2</sup> See above, Chapter XXXI, Section 3.

last by a combination of injustices—game laws, death and transportation for sheep-stealing, and work on 7s. a week—rose against their masters. Even at the height of their fury they shed no blood; but they burnt ricks and broke into houses. This was enough—more than enough—to alarm the Government. A Special Commission of judges was sent down to Salisbury, Winchester, and other towns; at Salisbury 34 men were sentenced to death and 33 to transportation for life, besides numerous lesser sentences. No more than six or eight men were actually hanged; but 400 were transported to Australia from the ruined villages of southern England in the first month of the Reform Ministry.

#### 5. *The World after Waterloo*

English foreign policy from 1815 to 1830 naturally divides itself into the same two periods as our domestic history—the rule of Castlereagh and the rule of Canning. It was Canning who gained the reputation of being the leader of a liberal policy in Europe—the champion of Greece and of the South American Republics. Castlereagh did not go so far as his successor; compared with Canning, he was a reactionary, but compared with the other rulers of Europe he was mild and liberal.

Castlereagh's chief success was achieved in the critical years 1815-18. He played a large part in making the Vienna settlement,<sup>1</sup> which, with all its faults, was not vindictive to the defeated enemy—France. And Castlereagh scored another important success across the Atlantic. He arranged with the United States of America, with whom peace was concluded in 1814, that the rival navies on the Great Lakes should be scrapped (1817). Next year, he settled the Anglo-American frontier, hitherto determined only as far as the Great Lakes. By the agreement of 1818 the frontier was continued as far as the Rockies, along the 49th parallel of latitude. This frontier, as well as the waters of the Great Lakes, was undefended by either nation—a great triumph for the policy of peace and mutual trust, which, unfortunately, was not imitated by the nations of Europe.

Great Britain in 1815 found herself on the side of the victori-

<sup>1</sup> See above, Chapter XXXII, Section 5.

ous monarchies of the Continent—Austria, Russia, and Prussia. These Powers had been our allies in the struggle against Napoleon, but British opinion was not at all in favour of the despotism which obtained in eastern Europe. Englishmen were not well treated under Lord Liverpool's Government, yet they enjoyed more freedom of opinion and expression than the average German or the subjects of the Tsar.<sup>1</sup> Yet it was the Tsar, Alexander I (1801-25), with his ideal schemes and belief in the Divine Right of Monarchs, who suggested the so-called Holy Alliance between the rulers of Europe, which was drawn up 'conformably to the words of the Holy Scriptures which command all men to consider each other as brethren'. Castlereagh, who had few illusions, described the Holy Alliance as 'a piece of sublime mysticism and nonsense'; he refused to let the Prince Regent join it.

The Holy Alliance  
1815

Metternich

The real leader of Europe in the generation after Waterloo was not the idealist Tsar, but Prince Metternich, Chancellor of the Austrian Empire. Metternich's chief aim was to crush Revolution, whenever and wherever it appeared. In Austria itself he crushed not only Revolution, but all signs of a free life. He muzzled the press, he crowded the gaols with political prisoners. His example was followed in Prussia, and in most of the petty states of Germany and Italy. But this was not enough for Metternich; he wished to put the whole of Europe under the same iron discipline. Revolution, he considered, was an infectious disease, and must be suppressed everywhere. To stamp it out, he proposed to use the forces of the four chief Powers who had beaten Napoleon, and who had signed a Quadruple Alliance (1815)—Britain, Austria, Russia, and Prussia. Metternich was able to 'manage' the Tsar, in spite of his idealism; the real trouble was Britain. For Castlereagh and Wellington, though they disapproved of revolutions as strongly as Metternich, were not prepared to use British armies to put down revolutions in other countries. For the first ten years after Waterloo, a number of Congresses were held between the Great Powers; France was allowed to join after 1818. The Congress System might have worked well had the

The Congress System

<sup>1</sup> In Prussia, the leading German state, serfdom had only recently been abolished (1807); in Russia the peasants were still serfs (till 1861).

Powers all been of one mind; they could then have imposed their will on Europe. But the Congresses broke down, first because Britain refused to go as far as the other Powers, and secondly because jealousy broke up the concord of the 'Holy Allies'.

Castlereagh was suspicious of the Congress System; in 1820 he flatly declared that Britain would in no circumstances lend her aid to the forcible suppression of revolutions in foreign countries. Castlereagh was succeeded by Canning, who went farther. At the moment of his accession to power, a European Congress was meeting at Verona to consider the Spanish problem. The Spaniards had risen against their perjured king, Ferdinand VII, and were trying to win some measure of freedom for their country. Metternich wished the Powers to act jointly in announcing their disapproval of the Spanish revolution; in that case, said Canning, Britain would not take part. Eventually France acted alone, sent an army, and restored King Ferdinand.

Canning's annoyance at the spectacle of French troops crossing the Pyrenees—which revived memories of the Peninsular War for most Englishmen—led directly to his decisive American policy. The Spanish colonies in America had all revolted against the government of Ferdinand VII, and now refused to return to their allegiance. Ferdinand asked for a European Congress to be summoned; Canning refused to send a British representative (1824). Instead, he gave the French and Spanish Governments to understand that if they attempted to reconquer Spanish America they would be opposed by the British fleet. President Monroe of the U.S.A. followed this up with his famous 'Doctrine' that 'the American continents . . . are henceforth not to be considered as subjects for future colonization by any European Powers'; and that if the latter interfered in America, North or South, they would incur the hostility of the United States. Canning and Monroe between them thus gave the death-blow to the wider schemes of the 'Holy Alliance'. Powers, who wished to establish despotism in America and cut off the United States of America from the Pacific.<sup>1</sup> 'Contem-

<sup>1</sup> The Monroe 'Doctrine' kept first France and then Germany from developing a trans-Atlantic empire.

Canning  
and the  
Congresses

Spain  
1822

Canning  
and South  
America  
1823-4

Monroe  
Doctrine  
1823  
(December)

powers who held overseas possessions, Britain treated

plating Spain as our ancestors had known her' (said Canning in the House of Commons), I resolved that if France had Spain, it should not be Spain with the Indies. I called the New World into existence to redress the balance of the Old'.<sup>1</sup>

Before he died, Canning took one other important step which had the effect of breaking up the 'Holy Alliance' of the other Powers. The bone of contention was Greece. The Greek War of Independence (1821-9) was fought to expel the Turks from what had once been the home of European culture. The spectacle of the modern Greeks fighting for their freedom against the Turks aroused the generous enthusiasm of many Englishmen, educated in the classical tradition of Ancient Greece. Lord Byron died there, at Missolonghi (1824), fighting in the cause of freedom. The new Tsar, Nicholas I, anxious to strike a blow at the decaying Turkish Empire, prepared to intervene. Canning, disregarding the protests of Metternich, arranged for the British, French, and Russian fleets to be sent to the Levant. The result, which took place just after his death, was the battle of Navarino, when the Turkish and Egyptian fleets were sent to the bottom. French troops then completed the conquest of the Morea, the Russians marched on Adrianople, and the Turks had to acknowledge Greek independence (1829).

Battle of  
Navarino  
1827

A year later the reactionary government of Charles X of France gave way to the more liberal rule of his cousin Louis-Philippe (1830). This was a blow to the cause of despotism, which disturbed Metternich. Then came the revolt of the Belgians. Belgium had been placed, in 1815, under the rule of the Dutch king; the revolt of 1830 therefore upset the arrangements made at Vienna. Metternich disliked this, and considered that the Great Powers were being openly flouted. It fell to Canning's successor at the Foreign Office, Lord Palmerston, to co-operate with France in securing the independence of Belgium.<sup>2</sup>

Belgian  
Revolt  
1830

<sup>1</sup> Canning in 1824 officially recognized Mexico, Colombia, and other revolted Spanish colonies as independent states. His High Tory colleagues in the Cabinet were furious, and so was George IV, who had gone so far as to intrigue behind Canning's back with Metternich and the Tsar, but to no purpose.

<sup>2</sup> See Chapter XXXVIII, Section 1. (Belgian independence was the joint work of France and Britain.)

By 1830 the Congress System, as interpreted by Metternich, had broken down. Austria or her allies had, it is true, restored the corrupt Spanish government against the wishes of the Spanish people, and they had suppressed two minor revolutions in Italy. Also the Tsar crushed, for a century, the political independence of the unfortunate Poles when they revolted at the end of 1830. On the other hand, Greece and Belgium had both won their independence, the ex-Spanish colonies had defied their former masters, and, lastly, the reactionary king of France had been bundled off his throne. These events, had he lived to witness them all, would have pleased Canning, as they pleased his pupil Palmerston. These statesmen might dislike 'revolution', especially at home, but they were not willing to bolster up foreign tyrannies, Spanish, Turkish,<sup>1</sup> or Austrian.

Europe in 1830

Hence

help.

<sup>1</sup> Canning's anti-Turkish policy was reversed by his successors through fear of Russia. See below, Chaps. XXXVIII and XL.



THE NEW POLICE (see p. 786)

The Metropolitan Police Force in Hyde Park, awaiting the arrival of the Chartists in 1842 (see pp. 822-4).

## DATE SUMMARY: AFTER WATERLOO (1815-30)

### HOME AFFAIRS

### FOREIGN AND IMPERIAL

#### THE OLD TORIES (1815-22)

1812-27 LIVERPOOL MINISTRY	1815 HOLY ALLIANCE
1815 CORN LAW	Quadruple Alliance
1817 Habeas Corpus Act suspended	
Blanketeers	
1818 Dover-Calais Steamer	1818 Anglo-American Treaty
1819 Peterloo	1819 Voyage of the <i>Savannah</i>
Six Acts	
1820 George III <i>d.</i>	
1820-30 George IV	
1820 Cato Street Conspiracy	

#### THE TORY REFORMERS (1822-8)

1822 Shelley <i>d.</i>	1821-9 Greek War of Independence
Canning Foreign Sec.; Peel Home Sec.	1822 Congress of Verona
1823-7 Reform of Penal Code	1823-4 Canning and S. America
1823 Navigation Acts modified	1823 MONROE DOCTRINE
1824 Combination Acts repealed	1824-6 First Burmese War
1825 Stockton and Darlington Railway	1825 Tsar Alexander I <i>d.</i>
1827 Canning Ministry	1827 ✕ Navarino
1827-8 Goderich Ministry	

#### WELLINGTON (1828-30)

1828 Repeal of Test and Corporation Acts	
1829 Metropolitan Police Force	1829 W. Australia
Clare Election	
Catholic Emancipation	
1830-7 William IV	1830 French Revolution
1830 Liverpool and Manchester Railway	1830-48 Louis-Philippe, King of the French
Huskisson killed	1830 Belgian Revolt



# XXXVII

## THE REFORM ERA (1830-52)

### 1. *The Reform Bill of 1832*

THE famous Ministry which passed the Reform Bill took office during the last months of 1830. The Prime Minister was Charles, Earl Grey, who forty years before had stood with Fox and his friends in championing the cause of Reform in a hostile House of Commons. Grey's Ministry contained two prominent Canningites—Palmerston and Melbourne—who were destined to become Whig Prime Ministers; Althorp, leader of the House of Commons; Brougham, the Lord Chancellor; and Lord Durham, perhaps the most far-seeing member of the Government. A younger man, Lord John Russell, was at first outside the Cabinet, but was soon admitted to the inner councils of the party. The first work of the Ministry was to appoint a Committee on Parliamentary Reform under the chairmanship of Durham. It was this Committee which recommended the sweeping reforms which were afterwards carried out; so that to Lord Durham belongs the credit of suggesting a revolution in the government of Britain, as well as in that of the British Empire.<sup>1</sup>

The representative system of England and Wales, which Durham's Committee examined, had been in existence, with little alteration, since Tudor times. The systems of Scotland and Ireland dated from the Acts of Union of 1707 and 1800, respectively, but they embodied all the defects of the former parliamentary systems of those countries. The distribution of seats was most unequal. There were 658 members of the House of Commons; of those England and Wales returned 513, Ireland 100, and Scotland 45. Of the English and Welsh members, 419 represented boroughs, and only 94 the counties.<sup>2</sup>

The crux of the whole Reform question lay in the repre-

<sup>1</sup> See Chap. XXXIX.

<sup>2</sup> Two for each of the forty English counties, with two extra for Yorkshire, and one each for the twelve Welsh counties.

Nomina-  
tion, rotten,  
and free  
boroughs.

resentation of the boroughs. Of these we may consider three classes which may be described as nomination boroughs, rotten boroughs, and boroughs where the system of election was, comparatively speaking, free. In the nomination boroughs, the owner had the absolute right to nominate his own Members of Parliament. It mattered not if the 'constituency' was an uninhabited mound, like Old Sarum, or had disappeared from the face of the earth, like Dunwich, once in Suffolk, but now under the waters of the North Sea. No one pretended that such a system represented the people;<sup>1</sup> indeed, the owners of nomination boroughs regarded these places as their own property, and sold them like houses or land if they so desired. The patron of rotten boroughs had not such direct control; he was obliged to use bribery in order to get his candidate returned for Parliament. Yet so small was the number of electors in these rotten boroughs that the expenditure of a few thousand pounds would buy all their votes. In the third class of boroughs, where the population was usually larger and the franchise wider, there were too many electors to allow of bribery on a large scale, but there were not many such constituencies. The counties were not so corrupt as the boroughs, but the influence of the local landowners was excessive. It has been estimated that only about 200 members, less than a third of the whole Parliament, were returned by a comparatively free vote of the electors.

Scotland  
and Ireland

The absurdity of allowing the rotten-borough system to continue in existence, while large and growing towns like Birmingham and Leeds were entirely unrepresented, had long been obvious to reformers. Macaulay, who was then a Member of Parliament, ridiculed a system, the principle of which was 'to invest a hundred drunken potwallopers in one place, or the owner of a ruined hovel in another, with powers which are withheld from cities renowned to the farthest ends of the earth'. In Scotland and Ireland, the representative system was even more corrupt than in England. Scotland was represented by 45 members (only one more than Cornwall, where the population was one-eighth of the Scottish), returned by less than 4,000 electors, controlled by less than 150 patrons. Similarly, the

<sup>1</sup> 'Mr. Canning', remarked Walter Bagehot, 'was an eloquent man, but even he could not say that a decaying tree-stump was the people.'

Irish elections were almost entirely controlled by 50 or 60 land-owners. But even in those constituencies where the representative system was fairest—in the English counties and the boroughs with a wide franchise—there was much room for reform. The borough franchise differed from place to place to a startling extent; it was based, in fact, upon local custom.

A varying franchise

Lord Durham's Committee, whose report was adopted by the Whig Government, recommended three things: first, disfranchisement of the decayed towns (all the nomination and some of the rotten boroughs); secondly, enfranchisement of large towns, hitherto unrepresented; thirdly, the adoption of a uniform franchise for all boroughs. The Government decided that half measures would be useless. When, therefore, Lord John Russell rose in the House of Commons, on the 1st of March 1831, to introduce the Reform Bill, he was prepared with a sweeping measure. A gasp of astonishment arose from the crowded benches as Lord John read out the terms of the Bill. Over fifty boroughs, returning two members each, were to be disfranchised, and fifty more were to lose one member out of two.<sup>1</sup> At the end of his speech Russell read out lists of the doomed boroughs; each name was greeted with ironical cheers, loud laughter, or rude comments. Few members supposed that the Bill would ever become law.

The First Reform Bill  
1 March 1831

During the debates which followed, opponents of the Bill endeavoured to defend the existing system on various grounds,<sup>2</sup> e.g. that the system had been designed by 'the wisdom of our ancestors' and ought not to be meddled with, or that it had in the past produced some very able statesmen, and a new system would not be likely to produce better.<sup>3</sup> Many of these arguments

Debates on the Reform Bill, 1831

<sup>1</sup> These numbers were slightly altered when the Bill in its final form became law. See below, p. 801.

<sup>2</sup> Lord Stormont, M.P. for Aldborough, remarked that that town was made a borough by Edward I, and that it had not grown any smaller since then. 'Does the noble Lord remember (asked Macaulay) the change that has taken place in the country during the last five centuries? Does he remember how much England has grown in population while Aldborough has been standing still?'

<sup>3</sup> To this argument Macaulay replied that there were bound to be 'happy accidents' in any system. If the hundred tallest men in England were made members of Parliament, there would probably be *some* able

were answered by Macaulay, who made one of his greatest speeches on the second night of the debate. He pointed out that the overwhelming feeling of the country demanded Reform, and that if it were not satisfied there would be a revolution.

'Who flatters himself', said the speaker, 'that he can turn this feeling back? . . . We have had laws. We have had blood. New treasons have been created. The press has been shackled. The Habeas Corpus Act has been suspended. Public meetings have been prohibited. The event has proved that these expedients were mere palliatives. You are at the end of your palliatives. The evil remains. It is more formidable than ever. What is to be done?'<sup>1</sup>

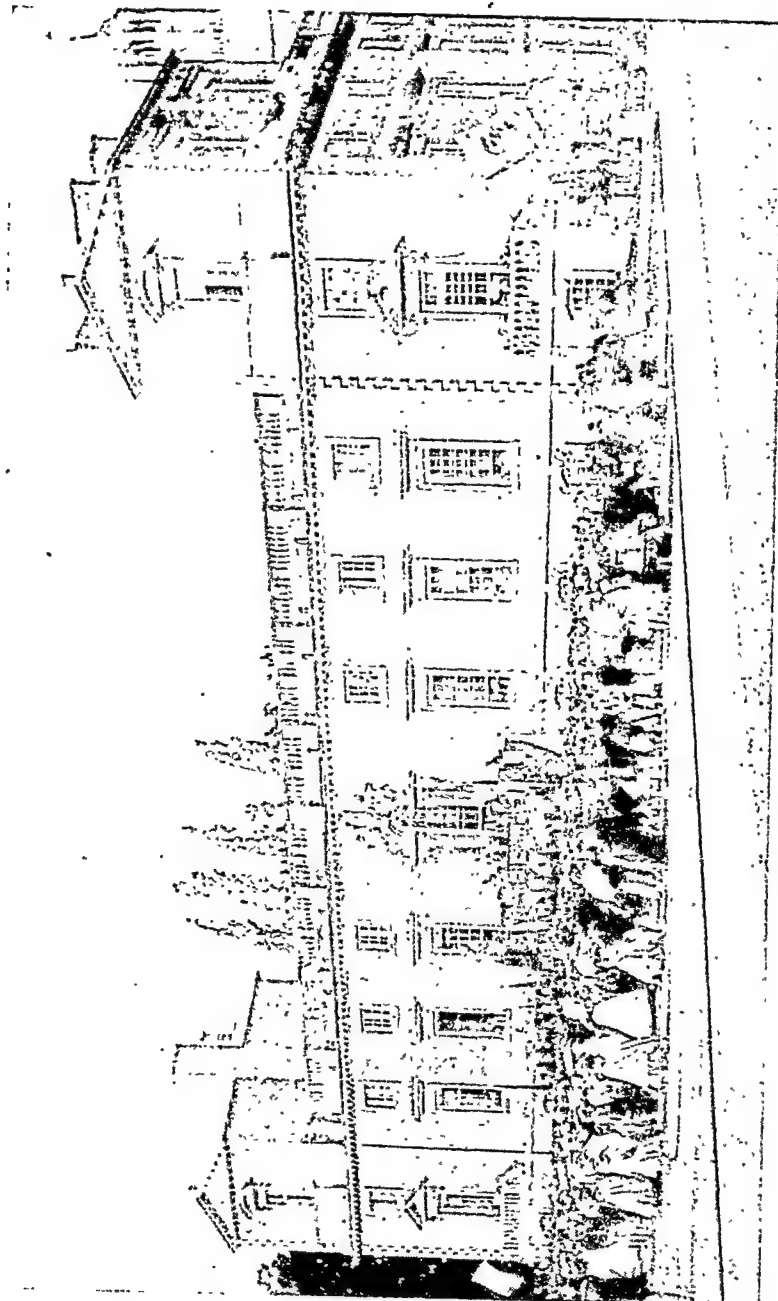
In a magnificent peroration, Macaulay implored his hearers to 'reform that you may preserve', and warned them of the frightful danger of resisting any longer the wish of the mass of the people:

'Turn where we may, within, around, the voice of great events is proclaiming to us, reform that you may preserve. Now, therefore, while everything at home and abroad forebodes ruin to those who persist in a hopeless struggle against the spirit of the age, now, while the crash of the proudest throne of the continent is still resounding in our ears, now, while the roof of a British palace affords an ignominious shelter to the exiled heir of forty kings,<sup>2</sup> now, while the heart of England is still sound, now, while old feelings and old associations retain a power and a charm that may too soon pass away, take counsel, not of prejudice, not of party spirit, but of history, of reason, of the ages which are past, of the signs of this most portentous time.'

On the 22nd of March, the Reform Bill passed its second reading by a majority of one, amidst scenes of the wildest excitement. But a few weeks later the Government was defeated in the Committee stage of the Bill. Grey asked the king to dissolve Parliament, so that he could appeal to the country. William IV reluctantly consented to do so. As the firing of the guns announced the approach of the royal carriage, a furious debate was proceeding in both Houses. Then the Commons were summoned to the bar of the House of Lords; the entrance men amongst them. 'We read in ancient history, that a very able king was elected by the neighing of his horse; but we shall scarcely, I think, adopt this mode of selection.'

<sup>1</sup> Macaulay's *Speeches*, 2 March 1831.

<sup>2</sup> Charles X of France.



VICTORIAN POLITICS

A meeting at Wilton during the General Election of 1865 (a contemporary photograph).

of the king cut short the debate, and the Parliament was dissolved. In the General Election which followed, the Whigs gained a majority of over one hundred. In this critical hour, the rotten-borough system failed to work. Electors, accompanied to the poll by roaring mobs demanding reform, dared not vote as their patrons told them. The voice of an indignant people made itself heard; Grey and his colleagues were astonished, and not a little alarmed, at their own popularity.

General  
Election  
1831

Second  
and Third  
Bills, 1831

When the new Parliament assembled, the Government introduced a second Reform Bill, which differed but little from the first. This quickly passed through the Commons, but in October the Lords threw it out by a majority of 41. At once the whole country was in an uproar; scenes of indescribable excitement took place. At Bristol the mob burnt down the Mansion House, at Nottingham the Castle; in the north the people were drilling and arming for a fight. In December, the Government introduced a *third* Reform Bill, which passed its third reading in the Commons in March 1832.

The days  
of May  
1832

The month of May, 1832, witnessed the final and most dramatic scenes. The Lords mutilated the Bill (in Committee), and Grey told the king he must destroy the Tory majority in the Lords or the Government would resign. He asked William IV to create a sufficient number of Whig peers; when the king refused this request, he resigned. The king sent for Wellington, who tried to form a Ministry, amid signs of an impending revolution. But Sir Robert Peel (as he now was) flatly refused to join the Duke, who had to give up his attempt. The king, therefore, had to ask Grey to return, which he did on receipt of the king's written promise to create the required Whig peers. But Wellington saved the king from this necessity; he withdrew his opposition to the Bill. When the Bill came up for its final reading, Wellington and about a hundred peers left the House. The Bill was passed, and received the royal assent on 7 June 1832.<sup>1</sup>

Reform Bill  
passed  
1832

<sup>1</sup> *First Bill*. Introduced March 1831. Defeated in Committee (Commons) April. General Election. Whig majority.

*Second Bill*. June 1831. Passed Commons. Thrown out by Lords (October). Riots in the country.

*Third Bill*. December 1831. Passed Commons. Defeated in Lords (May 1832). Grey resigns. Wellington fails to form a Cabinet. Grey returns. Bill passes Lords and receives the royal assent. June 1832.

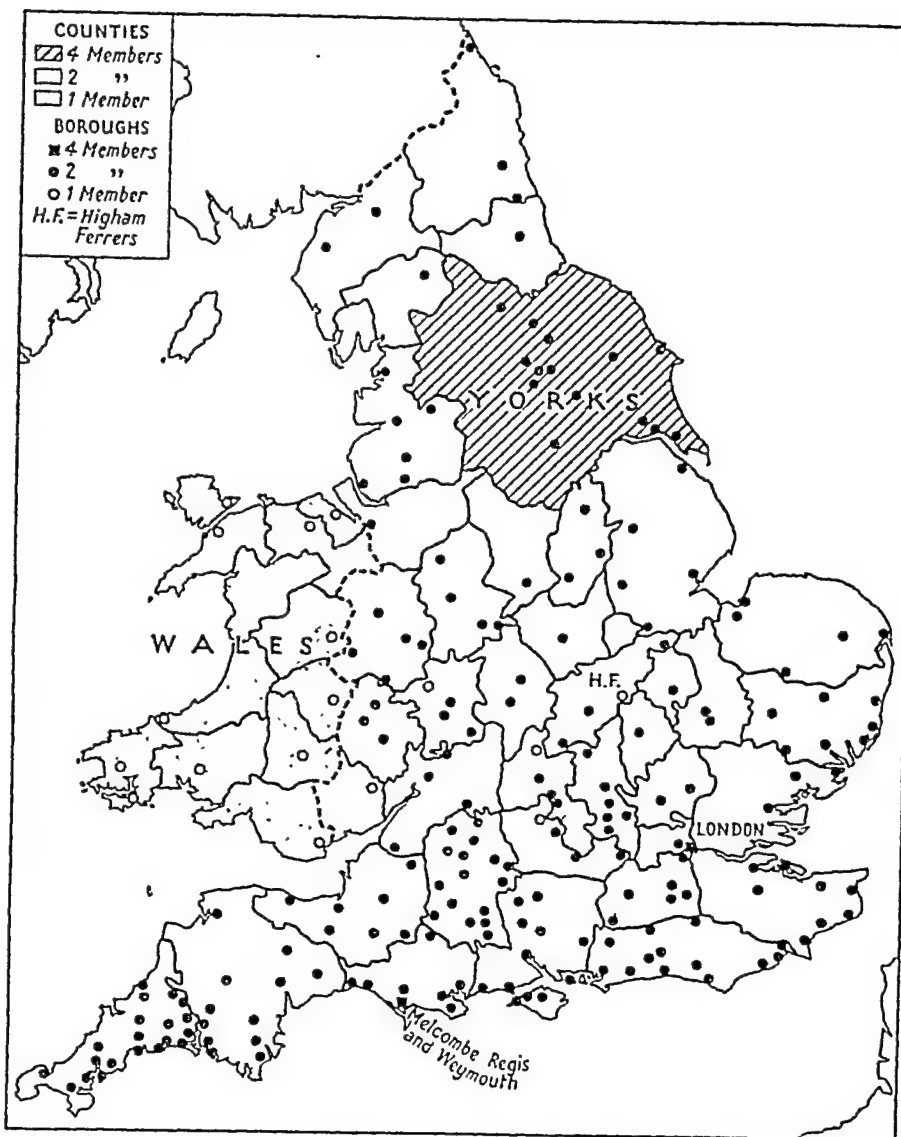
By the provisions of the Reform Act, 55 boroughs (having less than 2,000 inhabitants) lost both their members and 30 others lost one member. These and some minor changes (see p. 804) made 143 seats available for distribution. Of these, 65 were given to the counties, 44 went to 22 large towns, such as Birmingham and Manchester, which received two members each; 21 were given to smaller towns, each receiving one; 8 were given to Scotland and 5 to Ireland. In the towns, all householders paying an annual rent of £10 received the right to vote. In the counties, all freeholders retained the vote, which was also now given to those who paid in rent £10 or more a year on a long lease or £50 a year on a short lease, i.e. to all the more substantial tenant-farmers.

The passage of the Reform Act of 1832, which ranks in importance with the Revolution of 1688, had the effect of transferring political power from the aristocracy to the middle classes. Its authors regarded it as permanent. They failed to foresee that, now the franchise was altered, the classes that still remained unenfranchised would be certain to demand further Reform Bills.<sup>1</sup> The men whose riots at Bristol and Nottingham had coerced the House of Lords had not yet been given the vote and were far from satisfied. But a generation was to pass, before a Second Reform Act<sup>2</sup> was placed on the Statute Book, in circumstances less full of danger than those of 1832.

It has been calculated that after 1832 one in 24 of the population could vote; after 1867, one in 12; after 1884, one in 7; and after the Acts of 1918 and 1928<sup>2</sup> (when women received the vote) 3 out of 5 of the population had the vote.

<sup>1</sup> For the Reform Acts of 1867 and 1884, see Chap. XL.

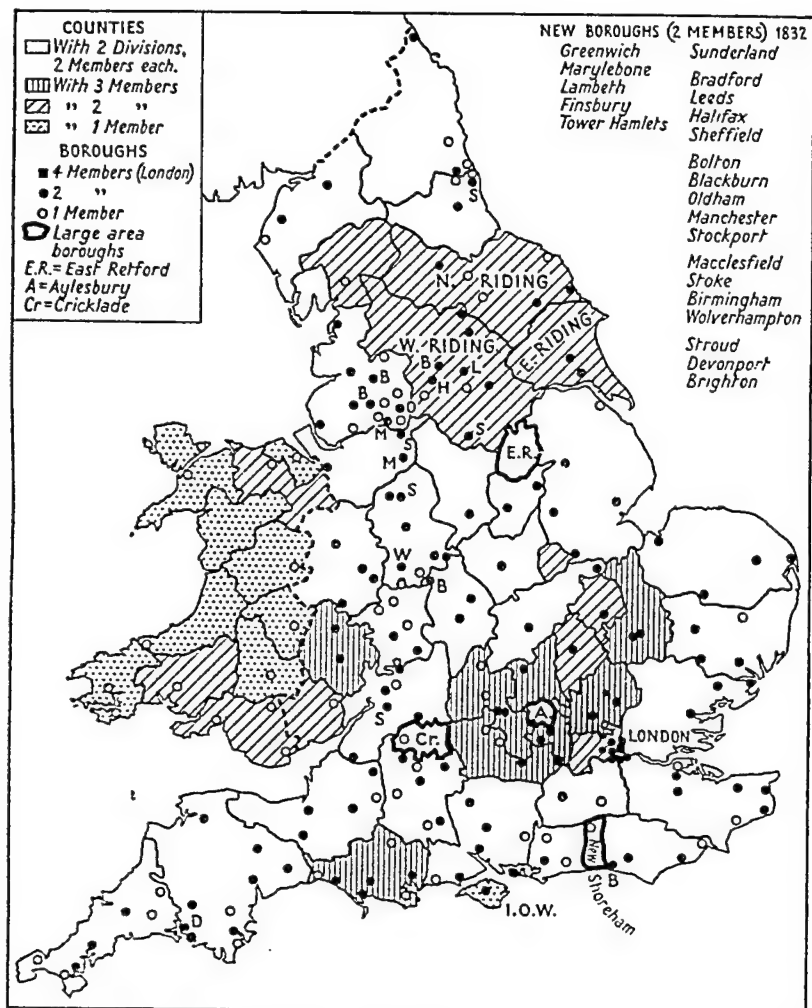
<sup>2</sup> See Chap. XLIV.



#### PARLIAMENTARY REPRESENTATION BEFORE 1832

The Welsh Boroughs and half a dozen boroughs in England returned one member; London returned four. All the other English boroughs returned two members. Note the large number of boroughs in the south of England, e.g. 20 in Cornwall and 16 in Wiltshire. Most of these were small villages, e.g. East Looe and West Looe in Cornwall. Yorkshire returned four members from 1821 to 1832.





#### PARLIAMENTARY REPRESENTATION: 1832-67

26 Counties, each divided into 2 Divisions, with 2 members each	104
7 Counties, 3 members each (Cambs., Herts., Bucks., Oxon., Berks., Herefords., and Dorset)	21
12 Counties (9 English, 3 Welsh), 2 members each	24
10 Counties (9 Welsh, and I.O.W.)	10

159

Reckoning the I.O.W. and the Yorkshire Ridings as counties.  
Note the large towns, chiefly in the north of England, which were unrepresented before 1832.

## THE REFORM ACTS

## I. THE ACT OF 1832

*The Franchise.*

i. Boroughs: £10 householders.

ii. Counties: Freeholders, and leaseholders of £10 (or £50 for short leases).

*Distribution of Seats.*

	Before 1832	1832-67
England and Wales		
Counties . . .	94	159
Boroughs . . .	419	341
Scotland . . .	45	53
Ireland . . .	100	105
	<u>658</u>	<u>658</u>

## Changes made by the Act:

55 Boroughs, 2 members, disfranchised . . . . .	110
Higham Ferrers, 1 member, disfranchised . . . . .	1
30 Boroughs, 2 members, reduced to 1 . . . . .	30
Melcombe Regis and Weymouth, 4 members, reduced to 2 . . . . .	2
	<u>143</u>
To English and Welsh Counties . . . . .	65
To 22 large towns (2 each) . . . . .	44
To 21 smaller towns . . . . .	21
To Scotland . . . . .	8
To Ireland . . . . .	5
	<u>143</u>

*Sub-division of Counties.*

This Act began the practice of the sub-division of counties. By it, 26 counties were each divided into two Parliamentary Divisions; the remainder returned one, two, or three members (see map, p. 803). Besides this, four boroughs—E. Retford, Aylesbury, Cricklade, and New Shoreham—were greatly extended in area (see map). Except that they had the borough franchise, these four areas were to all intents and purposes county divisions.

## II. THE ACT OF 1867

*The Franchise.*

Boroughs: all male householders, and lodgers paying £10 a year rent. Counties: £12 householders.

*Re-distribution of Seats.*

Towns under 10,000 population were not allowed a second member, and a few boroughs were disfranchised. This gave 45 seats, re-distributed as follows:—25 to the counties (which were further sub-divided); 19 to towns (including a third member to Birmingham, Manchester, Liverpool, and Leeds); 1 to London University.

*The Boundary Act* (1868). By this the practice of including tracts of surrounding country in borough areas (as at Aylesbury, &c.) was extended to a large number of constituencies.

## III. THE ACT OF 1884: REDISTRIBUTION ACT (1885)

These two Acts together constituted a very sweeping reform. The first practically established democracy, and raised the electorate from 2 to 3 millions. The second extinguished 160 seats (compared with 143 in 1832) and carried out a very large measure of redistribution.

*The Franchise.*

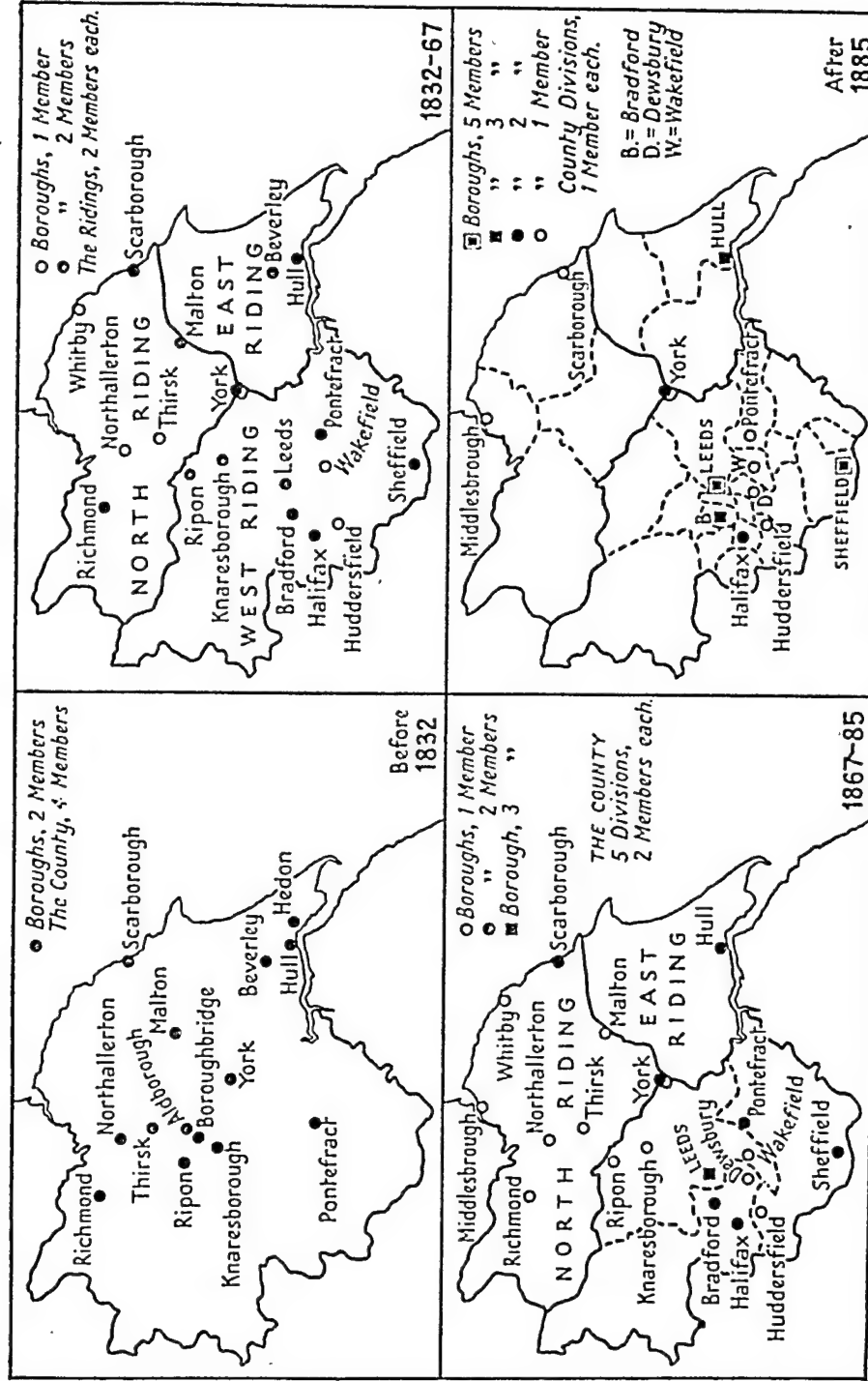
Every male adult householder enfranchised, in the country as well as the towns. The distinction between borough and county franchise abolished.

*Re-distribution of Seats.*

1. The old double-membered constituency was abandoned as the normal type; it was retained only in the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge and in 21 towns. The counties were re-divided so as to provide single-member constituencies—the normal type to-day.

2. Boroughs of less than 15,000 population merged in the counties; boroughs of less than 50,000, one member.

3. Large towns. London obtained 37 additional members, Liverpool 6, Glasgow and Birmingham 4.



YORKSHIRE, 1832-85

## 2. *Reform in Factory, Town, and Village*

The Reform Era, which we are considering in this chapter, may be taken to cover three Whig ministries, and one Conservative. The Whig ministries were those of Lord Grey (1830-4), Lord Melbourne (1834-41),<sup>1</sup> and Lord John Russell (1846-52); the Conservative ministry was that of Sir Robert Peel (1841-6). Peel, who renamed his party 'Conservative' instead of 'Tory', was, in some ways, as much a reformer as Grey. He accepted the Reform Bill as a *fait accompli*, and declared to his constituents, in the Tamworth Manifesto (1834), that he regarded its provisions as a final settlement, which he had no intention of upsetting.

The main lines of reform were all laid down by the Royal Commissions which Lord Grey's Government appointed to consider such questions as the Poor Law, the factories, and the state of town corporations. The reports which the Commissioners made were all followed by legislation. The first report to take effect was that on factories; Lord Althorp, the leader of the Commons, introduced his Factory Act in 1833. Though there had been earlier Factory Acts,<sup>2</sup> they had been ineffective because they left the inspection of factories to local magistrates, who neglected their duties. Althorp's Act appointed paid inspectors, whose duty it was to see that the law was carried out. Apart from this, the Act prohibited the employment of children under nine in factories, and limited the hours of labour of those under eighteen.<sup>3</sup> The great importance of the Act of 1833 is that it insisted on the principle of State interference between masters and their employees; it was the beginning of a vast code of laws which have been passed since then to protect the workers in the interests of the national welfare.

The hero of factory legislation was Lord Ashley, afterwards Earl of Shaftesbury, who devoted a long life to the service of his less fortunate countrymen. Ashley was a man who knew little of the joy of life himself, for he was brought

<sup>1</sup> There was an interval of four months (1834-5) during which Sir Robert Peel was Prime Minister.

<sup>2</sup> See above, p. 770.

<sup>3</sup> Children (under 13)—9 hours; 'young persons' (13-18)—12 hours.

up in the strictest religious school, which frowned on the simplest pleasures.<sup>1</sup> But Ashley had a valiant heart; and no knight in olden time ever fought more bravely against the powers of darkness and of evil than he. For years he laboured on behalf of the wretched boys who were employed to climb up chimneys and sweep them out. The sufferings of these poor little urchins—whose bodies were bruised and battered as a consequence of their hideous employment, whose lives were one long tale of cruelty inflicted by brutal masters—were almost unbelievable. Yet their sufferings were thought to be unavoidable—because fashionable chimneys were twisted, and could not be swept with a broom! But in 1840 Ashley succeeded in his efforts; the Government brought in a Bill to prohibit the employment of child sweeps.

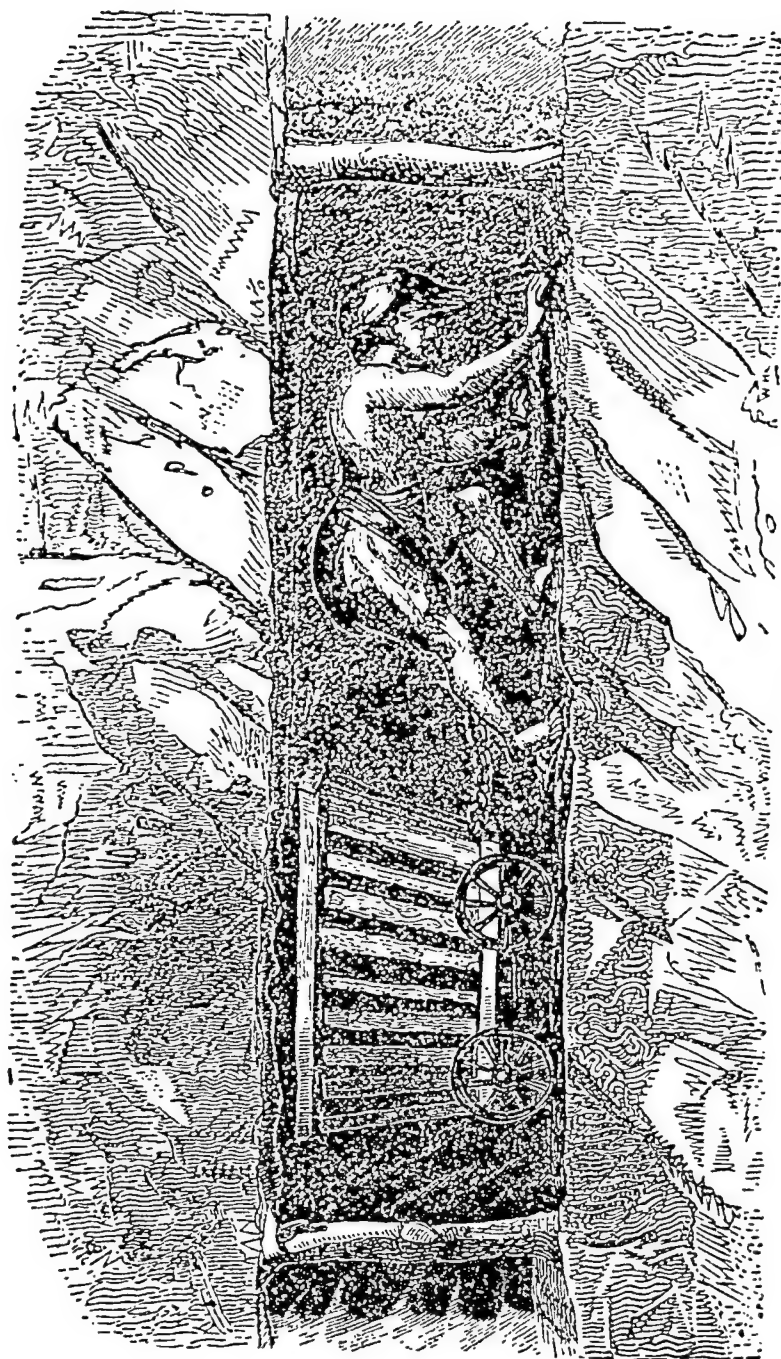
In the same year, Lord Melbourne's Government appointed a Commission, at Ashley's request, on mines. The terrible conditions in which men, women, and children then worked underground surpassed even the worst scenes in the early factories.<sup>2</sup> Disraeli has described, in a work of fiction, but with no exaggeration, the life of the miners of those times.

'They come forth; the mine delivers its gang, and the pit its bondmen; the forge is silent and the engine is still. The plain is covered with the swarming multitude; bands of stalwart men, black as the children of the tropics; and troops of youth—alas! of both sexes. Yet these are to be—some are—the mothers of England. Naked to the waist, an iron chain fastened to a belt of leather runs between their legs clad in canvas trousers, while on hands and feet an English girl, for twelve, sometimes for sixteen hours a day, hauls and hurries tubs of coal up subterranean roads, dark, precipitous and plashy; circumstances which seem to have escaped the notice of the Society for the Abolition of Negro Slavery. Those worthy gentlemen too, appear to have been unconscious of the sufferings of the little Trappers, which was remarkable, as many of them were in their own employ.'<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See below, Chap. XLI.

<sup>2</sup> 'No horse in an overworked coach, no donkey in a costermonger's barrow, few slaves the property of a West Indian planter, experienced the treatment which was the lot of many children in mines.' (Spencer Walpole, *History of England*, iv.)

<sup>3</sup> Disraeli, *Sybil*, Book 3, Chap. 1.



STATE OF THE MINES

A revelation of the Royal Commission. A half-naked girl drawing a loaded truck in an underground gallery.

Mines Act  
1842

After the Royal Commission had brought the horrors of the mines to light, the public conscience was aroused, and Parliament passed a Mines Act (1842), prohibiting the work of women, and of children under thirteen, in mines.<sup>1</sup> Emboldened by this success, Ashley pressed on with more Factory Acts: the Act of 1844 included women under the same regulations as 'young persons', while the Act of 1847 contained the famous Ten Hours' Clause—which was fiercely contested in Parliament—which limited the labour of women and 'young persons' in factories to ten hours per day. As the work of factories could not be carried on by men alone, this had the effect of reducing the men's hours as well. This triumph of the principle of state interference was won in the teeth of the factory-owners' opposition. Even some members of the Cabinet—Lord John Russell's—voted against it, but Ashley's propaganda, supported by public opinion, was too strong for them.

Ten Hours'  
Bill, 1847

The Old  
Poor Law

One of the most unpopular, but one of the most necessary, reforms passed by the Whig Government was the Poor Law of 1834. It was designed to take the place of the system of Poor Relief which had been in vogue for the past forty years. Under the old system—which became general soon after the Speenhamland decision of 1795<sup>2</sup>—it was the practice to make up the wages of workmen out of the rates, if those wages were insufficient to support life; the decision rested with the magistrates, who made grants according to a definite scale. This system, it was stated with truth, pauperized a large proportion of the labouring classes. The reformers of 1834 were, therefore, determined to stop any form of 'outdoor relief', i.e. relief given by the parish to a man in his own cottage. The new Poor Law of 1834 laid down the principle that no outdoor relief should be given to able-bodied workmen; if they wished to obtain help from the parish, they must come inside the workhouse. The new law was very unpopular, for the treatment meted out inside the workhouses was harsh.<sup>3</sup> In time, however, it had the

✓

The Poor  
Law of  
1834

<sup>1</sup> The colliery owners in the north of England complained bitterly against this interference with their 'liberty'; they protested that it would be impossible to run their mines unless they could employ boys of eight.

<sup>2</sup> See Chapter XXXI.

<sup>3</sup> See Dickens's *Oliver Twist*.



desired effect of forcing employers to pay at least a subsistence wage, and of cutting down the number of paupers in England. But it did not do so at once; indeed it is doubtful whether, at any time in our history, there was so much unemployment and distress as in the first ten years of Queen Victoria's reign. The pauper roll of England and Wales in 1839 contained 1,137,000 persons, and nearly two millions in 1840. At this time the population of England and Wales was about sixteen millions.

The new Poor Law was administered by Boards of Guardians, who presided over groups of parishes, known as 'Unions'. Their activities were controlled by the Poor Law Commissioners—later the Poor Law Board.<sup>1</sup> The moving spirit among the Poor Law Commissioners was Edwin Chadwick, whose experience in this field brought him into contact with the terrible housing conditions common all over England. By passing his Public Health Act (1848), Chadwick struck a great blow at the old uncontrolled methods of the England of *laissez-faire*, that is, *let* (people) *do* (as they think fit), or the principle that Government should not interfere with the actions of individuals. This Act set up a Public Health Board in London, and local Boards of Health in various places. Chadwick's Act was the prelude to a long series of health reforms:<sup>2</sup> it is not too much to say that it introduced the idea of sanitation into most English towns.

Edwin  
Chadwick

✓  
Chadwick's  
Public  
Health  
Act, 1848

One of the most far-reaching of the Whig reforms was that which affected the government of towns.<sup>3</sup> Grey set up a Commission, and Melbourne passed the necessary law—the Municipal Corporations Act of 1835. It is difficult to realize the deplorable state of the average English town before this reform.

State of  
towns

<sup>1</sup> Merged into the Local Government Board (1871), which later (1919) became the Ministry of Health.

<sup>2</sup> In Preston, a typical 'mushroom' cotton town, between 1837 and 1843 more than half the children of the operatives died before attaining five years of age; and the average age at death of an operative was 18 years!

<sup>3</sup> At this time—a century or so ago—Manchester, Birmingham, Sheffield, Halifax, Huddersfield, and Bradford were still subject to a lord of the manor and to other obsolete paraphernalia of the Middle Ages.

The Commissioners revealed some startling facts. Town corporations were, in many cases, elected on a very antiquated basis, e.g. in Portsmouth, with a population of 46,000, only 102 freemen were capable of taking part in the town government. The corporations, when elected, habitually disregarded their duties, and all kinds of corruption were rampant. Charities, which the corporation was supposed to support, were often neglected, and their funds diverted to private uses; at Exeter the corporation was 'indebted' to various charities to the amount of £17,000. Many schools with generous endowments (administered by the Town Council) were similarly defrauded. At Coventry a school with an income of £900 a year spent £700 a year on two masters: the school had one pupil.

✓  
Municipal  
Corpora-  
tions Act  
1835

The Municipal Corporations Act which followed the Report of the Commissioners, applied, in the first instance, to some two hundred corporate towns. It introduced a single type of town council, to be elected by all male ratepayers who resided within seven miles of the borough. The appointment of officers—mayor, clerk, treasurer—was made regular; and there was to be a systematic audit of the borough accounts, at regular intervals. By such methods the government of our towns was gradually transformed.<sup>1</sup>

England was very far from being a happy or a well-governed country in 1835. Housing conditions were still deplorable, and one person in twelve was a pauper. But all honour is due to Lord Grey and his Government which began an era of Reform—an era which has continued ever since and has produced hundreds of Factory, Health, and Housing Acts, expanding the original Acts. The ministry which passed the Reform Bill, abolished slavery,<sup>2</sup> and began the reform of local government in England, must ever rank as one of the greatest in our history.

### 3. *The Coming of Free Trade*

In 1834 Lord Grey retired, and was succeeded by Lord Melbourne, who held office, with one short interval,<sup>3</sup> for seven

<sup>1</sup> See Chap. XL, § 3 (1) for later municipal reforms—Artisans' Dwellings and Public Health Acts of 1875.

<sup>2</sup> See below, p. 848.

<sup>3</sup> William IV dismissed the Government on his own account; he was

years. William Lamb, Viscount Melbourne, was a brilliant member of that triumphant aristocracy which had ruled England for a century and a half. Fortune had denied him nothing—he had wealth, health, good looks, power, social position; he was a lover of life, and had adorned the gayest society of the Regency. His was a fascinating character, though he was too cynical to be an ardent reformer. ‘Why not let it alone?’ was his characteristic comment. It is not surprising that, under such a man, the popularity of the Whig Party declined. Meanwhile the accession of a young queen to the throne added a new interest to Lord Melbourne’s life.

The death of William IV (1837) ended the connexion between England and Hanover<sup>1</sup> and prepared the way for the Victorian age. The old king was succeeded by his niece, Victoria, a girl of eighteen, the only daughter of William’s brother, the late Duke of Kent. Victoria took her regal duties very seriously. A feeling of loyalty towards the Throne—which the disreputable character of George IV and most of his brothers had so reasonably dispelled—was gradually restored. The queen, who was much given to strong likes and dislikes,<sup>2</sup> took an immediate fancy to Melbourne. He, for his part, paid her every attention, and instructed her in the duties of a constitutional sovereign. She did not at first understand that the sovereign must be a neutral in political disputes, as was shown soon after her accession. When Lord M., as she called him, had to resign, to make way for Sir Robert Peel (1839), the incoming minister asked that the Whig Ladies of the Bedchamber should be removed from the royal household. Victoria indignantly refused, and Sir Robert therefore refused to form a Government. Two years later the Whigs were defeated again, and this time the queen gave way.

Death of  
William IV

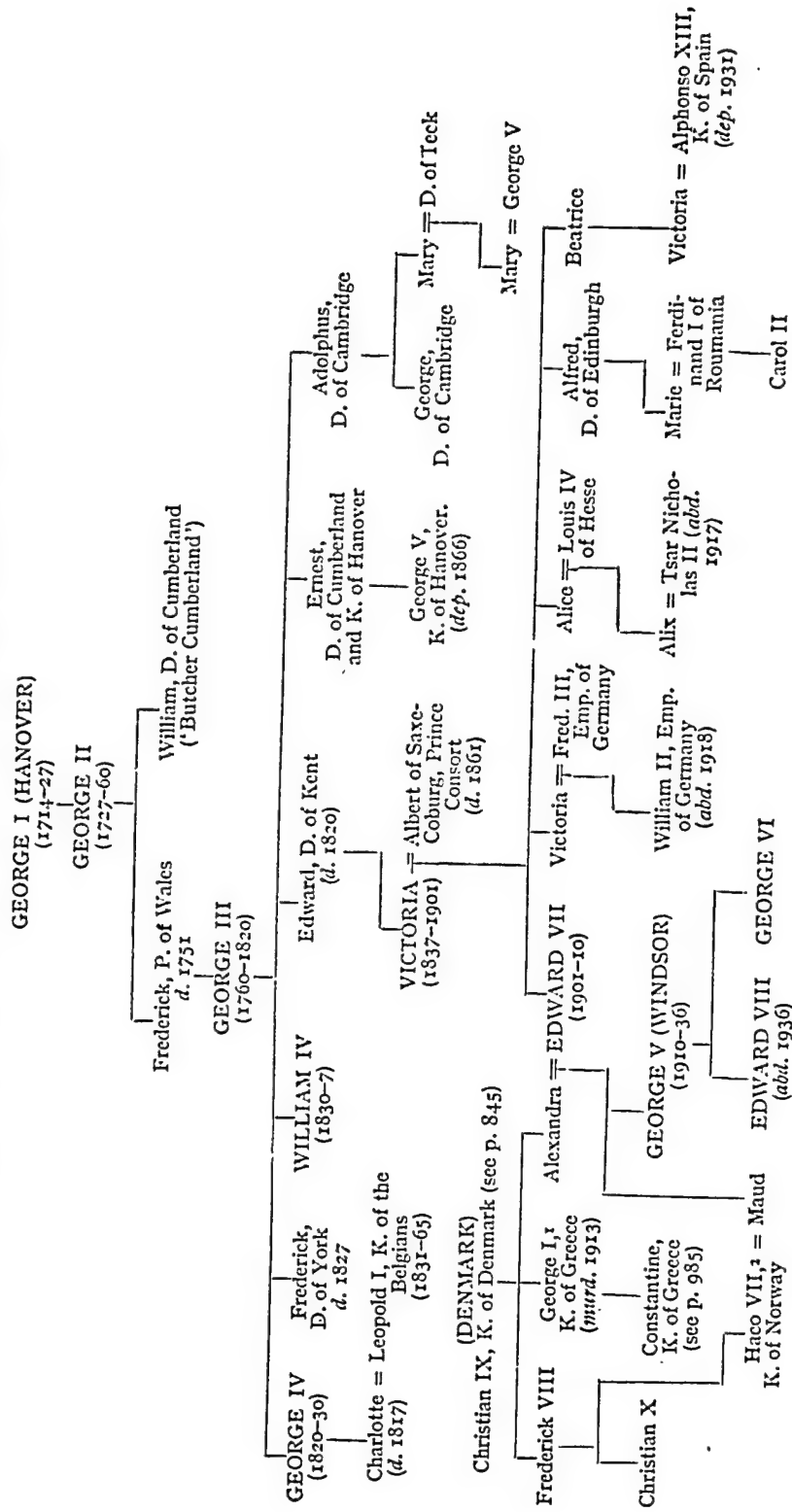
Victoria  
1837-1901

the last sovereign of England to do so. Peel formed a Ministry at the king’s request (1834), but, failing to obtain a majority, resigned again within five months.

<sup>1</sup> A woman could not succeed to the kingdom of Hanover. William IV was, therefore, succeeded by his next brother, the Duke of Cumberland. It was Cumberland’s son, George V of Hanover, who was turned off his throne by the Prussians in 1866. So the loss of Hanover in 1837 saved us from one European complication at least.

<sup>2</sup> Melbourne and Disraeli were her heroes; Palmerston and Gladstone her *bêtes noires*.

# THE HOUSES OF HANOVER AND WINDSOR AND THEIR CONNEXIONS



<sup>1</sup> Offered the throne of Greece by Britain, France, and Russia (1863).

<sup>2</sup> Chosen King of Norway on the separation of Norway and Sweden (1905).

Sir Robert Peel was an extraordinary contrast to Lord Melbourne. Austere in manner, hating company, he never learnt the art of pleasing his followers, whom he dominated by the sheer force of his personality. He was an autocrat in the Cabinet,<sup>1</sup> but an autocrat who earned respect. For Peel was a thorough master of politics, methodical and efficient in business, an expert chairman. But he was not a good 'party man'. For one thing he was far too liberal-minded, and too open-minded, to make a good Tory of the old school; for another he was always prepared, if need be, to sacrifice his party to the public interest. He did so on two memorable occasions.<sup>2</sup>

Peel's ministry contained three men of eminence who became Premiers after him: Lord Aberdeen, the Foreign Secretary, Lord Stanley, the Colonial Secretary, and W. E. Gladstone, then a young man of thirty-two in a junior post. Peel was his own finance minister and his Chancellor of the Exchequer played a minor part. His Budget of 1842 followed in the footsteps of Huskisson, and went a long way on the road to Free Trade. Tariffs had been first devised to raise money for the Government; then they had been used to regulate the whole trade of the country. Tariffs had been employed by rival towns in the Middle Ages, and they have been used by rival countries in later times. But Adam Smith,<sup>3</sup> at the close of the eighteenth century, had preached the doctrine of Free Trade; Peel and Huskisson were his disciples. They contended that the tariff system had the effect of hindering trade, and thus of making the country poorer. If trade were free, they contended, the individual industrialist and trader would have a better opportunity of becoming wealthy, and the community would thus become wealthier too.

In 1840 everything that was imported was taxed; no less than 1,200 articles were enumerated on the tariff. Peel (in his Budget of 1842) divided imports into three classes. He proposed a tax of 20 per cent. on manufactured goods, of 12 per

<sup>1</sup> 'Neither the Grand Turk nor a Russian Despot', said Cobden, 'had more power than Peel.'

<sup>2</sup> In 1829, over Catholic Emancipation, and in 1846 over the Corn Laws.

<sup>3</sup> See above, Chapter XXX, Section 5.

cent. on those partly manufactured, and of only 5 per cent. on raw materials. The Budgets of 1845-6 carried the process farther; by the latter year most raw materials could be imported free, while the tax on manufactured goods was only 10%. To make up for the loss to the revenue, and also to repair the damages of the Whig Government's shaky finance, Peel introduced an Income Tax of 7d. in the £ on all incomes over £150 a year and converted a deficit of 10 millions, which the Whigs had left, into a surplus of two millions. The Income Tax was introduced as a temporary measure, but it proved to be permanent.

Income  
Tax, 1842

Bank  
Charter  
Act, 1844

Peel next turned his attention to the banking system. By his Bank Charter Act (1844), he divided the Bank of England into two departments, one carrying on the business of an ordinary bank, the other a bank of note-issue only. The Bank of England was to be at liberty to issue notes to the amount of fourteen million pounds on the security of Government stock; above that amount it was obliged to have bullion (three-quarters gold) in its coffers, corresponding to the amount of notes issued. At the same time, Peel laid down that all new banks founded should in future be forbidden to issue notes. The effect of this, in time, was to make the Bank of England the only note-issuing bank, as it is at the present time. The insecurity of note-issue by smaller banks was thus avoided.<sup>1</sup>

Though Peel had lowered or abolished the tariff on various goods, he had so far not dared to repeal the Corn Laws. These laws, kept in force to protect the English farmer, were supported by the Tory squires who sat behind Peel in the House of Commons. But the still-increasing population<sup>2</sup> made it

<sup>1</sup> It should be remembered that there were, in 1844, many more banks than there are now. There were several hundred local private banks, besides nearly 300 joint-stock banks. A process of amalgamation, lasting about eighty years, has reduced this number to the 'Big Five' of the present day, and half a dozen smaller concerns mostly in London. The Scottish banks still issue their own notes.

<sup>2</sup> Population of Great Britain 1841: 18,800,000.

„ Ireland „ 8,175,000.

Population of Great Britain 1851: 20,900,000.

„ Ireland „ 6,500,000.

Famine and emigration reduced the population of Ireland; that of Britain steadily increased.

obvious that a constant and steady supply of foreign corn, unhampered by the interests of home producers, was becoming an absolute essential. A great agitation was set on foot for cheaper corn. The Anti-Corn-Law League (1838) was founded at Manchester by Richard Cobden and John Bright, who thought mainly of the consumers, not the producers, of corn. Cobden and Bright were both fine speakers and both were men of singular perseverance. They did not spare themselves, and, as Bright said, they practically lived in public meetings for years. They were both elected to Parliament, where their influence soon made itself felt.

Anti-Corn-  
Law  
League  
1838-46  
Cobden  
and  
Bright .

The various Corn Laws passed since 1815<sup>1</sup> had not solved the problem. Then came 1845, the year when it 'rained away the Corn Laws'. The English harvest was poor; but, worse still, the Irish potato crop—on which nine-tenths of the miserable peasants of Ireland supported a precarious existence—failed completely from blight. Irishmen were dying in thousands; Englishmen were starving. 'Will it be believed in future ages', said Cobden in the House, 'that in a country periodically on the point of actual famine—at a time when its inhabitants subsisted on the lowest food, the very roots of the earth—there was a law in existence which virtually prohibited the importation of bread?' Peel was converted by the logic of facts; by the end of 1845 he was prepared to repeal the Corn Laws.

The Irish  
Famine  
1845

He put the matter to his Cabinet, but Lord Stanley held out for Protection. Peel was ready to resign in favour of the Whigs, who were also prepared for Repeal. But Lord John failed to form a Government, and Peel had to resume the burden. In 1846 he introduced a Bill to repeal the Corn Laws:<sup>2</sup> the duty was to be reduced annually till 1849, until only a registration duty of 1s. per quarter remained. Great was the rage of the Protectionists—the landed squires who formed the backbone of the Tory party. These men, by one of the most amazing paradoxes of history, found a leader in Benjamin Disraeli, to whom Peel had refused office, and who now seized the opportunity to obtain at once his revenge and a place in the lime-light. Disraeli was a brilliant person; with the possible exceptions

Repeal of  
the Corn  
Laws, 1846

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 774, note.

<sup>2</sup> 'A damned dishonest Act, ma'am,' said Melbourne to the Queen.

of Peel and Gladstone, he was the most gifted man in that House of Commons. But he knew no mercy; squires cheered wildly while this 'outsider', as they used to consider Disraeli, struck blow after blow at their once-venerated chief. Peel got rid of the Corn Laws, with the help of Whig votes, but was turned out of office as soon as they were repealed. He had betrayed his party once more; but he had done his duty, as he saw it. Perhaps, as he somewhat pathetically remarked, his name would be remembered with gratitude in the homes of the poor.<sup>1</sup> Peel died in 1850, as the result of a fall from his horse.

The Repeal of the Corn Laws split the Tory party. The Whigs came in under Lord John Russell; the Tories were divided into Peelites and Protectionists.<sup>2</sup> Among the Peelites were Lord Aberdeen and Gladstone; among the Protectionists, Lord Stanley and Disraeli. Under the Russell Ministry the influence of Cobden and the Free Traders was paramount, and the import duties were still further lowered. On Russell's fall (1852), Lord Derby (as Stanley had now become) formed a Government, which, however, lasted less than a year. Aberdeen then became Premier in a combined Whig-Peelite ministry. Gladstone was Chancellor of the Exchequer in this ministry, and he accepted the same post later on under Palmerston.<sup>3</sup> Gladstone's work at the Exchequer was to complete what Huskisson and Peel had begun—to turn Britain into a Free Trade country. His Budget of 1853 reduced the tea duty; that of 1860 swept away 371 more duties so that, of the 1,200 imported articles taxable before Peel's reforms, 48 only remained on the list. The duty on French wines, which had no protective aim, was retained chiefly for revenue purposes. The great prosperity of industrial Britain after 1860 was ascribed, perhaps erroneously, to Free Trade, which became the accepted doctrine of all parties for the remainder of the century.

<sup>1</sup> The Repeal of the Corn Laws were not immediately followed by a fall in the price of corn. But the importation of foreign corn (which doubled in the next five years) prevented a *rise* in price.

<sup>2</sup> Numbers of the three parties at the General Election of 1847: Whigs, 325; Peelites, 105; Protectionists, 226. For the revival of Protection under Joseph Chamberlain (1903) see below, Chap. XLII.

<sup>3</sup> See next chapter.



# The Corn Laws.

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By ALLEN DAVENPORT.  
Author of all the Songs and Poems under the signature  
of Alpha.

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Air.—“Auld Lang Syne.”

Ye millions that so keenly feel  
The pressure of the times,  
To you I earnestly appeal,  
Then listen to my rhymes,  
In vain you labour night and day,  
The owners of the soil,  
By Corn Laws takes the bread away,  
That should reward your toil.

## CHORUS.

Then open every British port,  
And let the poor be fed,  
No longer see your children starve,  
And die through want of bread.

The haughty possess the land,  
And wield oppression's rod,  
In spite of that divine command,  
Found in the word of God ;  
The Corn Laws petrify their hearts,  
And make the nation groan,  
For when the people cry for bread,  
They only get a stone.  
Then open every, &c.

Down, down, with the starvation laws  
And no more be beguiled,  
Cheap bread must surely be the cause  
Of woman, man, and child ;  
All property is insecure,  
And insecure must be,  
Till they our plundered rights restore  
And make the Corn Trade free.  
Then open every, &c.

The Corn Laws are the greatest scourge  
That has been since the flood,  
Enacted since the time of George,  
Whose reign was that of blood !  
But we have now a Queen beloved,  
Oh ! let it not be said,  
That she can see and hear unmoved,  
Her people cry for bread.  
Then open every, &c.

‘The Corn Laws.’ A contemporary broadside.

#### 4. *Socialists and Chartists*

So far, in this chapter, we have considered only those changes which were brought about by Government action—the Reform Bill itself, the reforms of the Grey Ministry, and the change to Free Trade. These changes seem, at first sight, imposing. But they must not mislead us into supposing that a rapid alteration took place in the condition of the people. On the contrary, the abject misery of the poor was no less severe in the 'hungry forties' than it had been in the 'thirties'. In 1837, the year of Victoria's accession, one-tenth of the population of Manchester, and one-seventh of the population of Liverpool, lived in cellars. In Rochdale, in 1840, five-sixths of the population had hardly a blanket between them; at Paisley, 15,000 nearly starving persons had 'little or no clothing, and no bedding on which to lie'. At Bolton, it is recorded, the poor huddled in corners upon 'chopped dirt, the sweepings of a hen-house, mingled with a proportion of sparrows' nests'.

In such circumstances it is not surprising that many people grew impatient of Government efforts to deal with the public distress, or that some of the poor decided to help themselves. Before 1832, it had been confidently supposed that the mere passage of a Reform Bill would be automatically followed by wholesale improvements. But the Act of 1832, though it was certainly followed by reforms, did not create Heaven on earth; moreover, it enfranchised not the working classes, but the middle classes. This great disappointment, coupled with the continuance of public distress, led to several movements which were regarded, by the ruling classes, as revolutionary. Of these movements the most important were Socialism, early Trades Unionism, and Chartism.

The early Trade Union movement was much influenced by the ideas of Robert Owen.<sup>1</sup> After the success of his experiments at New Lanark, Owen tried to extend his ideas of industrial government to the rest of the country. He tried to do so through the medium of the trades unions, which, as we have seen, were not legalized till 1824. Ten years after that date, Owen formed a Grand National Consolidated Trades Union,

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 772.

which was joined by about half a million working people. Owen's ideas, which he tried to enforce through the medium of this Union, are interesting, although they failed at the time. They embodied the first attempt to achieve Socialism in England; indeed, Owen may be called the Father of English Socialism. He believed that the evils of his day were all due to the mad race for wealth among manufacturers, which led them to put all human considerations on one side. Therefore, said Owen, 'all individual competition is to cease; all manufactures are to be carried on by National Companies'. In these two sentences may be found the germ of much modern Socialist thought.<sup>1</sup>

Owen's  
Grand  
National  
Trades  
Union  
1834

But Owen's effort was a failure; it produced only an outbreak of strikes, which alarmed the Government but achieved nothing. The Whigs, no more prepared than the Tories to allow the working classes to help themselves, began a series of prosecutions, culminating in the iniquitous sentence passed on six Dorsetshire labourers—the Tolpuddle Martyrs—in 1834. These men, natives of Tolpuddle in Dorset, were tried for the offence of taking an oath to their trades union. They could not be prosecuted for combining to raise wages (then seven shillings a week for the farm labourer), since the Combination Acts were repealed; but they could be, and were, condemned under an old law of 1797—the Unlawful Oaths Act.<sup>2</sup> Under this Act, all six men were sentenced to seven years' transportation. There was widespread indignation at this savage sentence; protest meetings were held all over England. Meanwhile the six men were sent to Australia, and it took four years of protesting to rescue them from the convict settlement. It was this incident, more than anything else, which caused the 'base, bloody and brutal Whigs', as one critic called them, to lose the confidence of the working people.

The Tol-  
puddle  
Martyrs  
1834

After the failure of Owen's schemes, and the sentences on the Dorset labourers, much working-class energy was diverted to Chartism. After the failure of Chartism, English Trades

<sup>1</sup> See below, Chapter XLV.

<sup>2</sup> In those days, there was a quaint ritual attached to the ceremony of joining a union—skeletons, masks, battle-axes, and other curious properties were brought into play.

Unionism took a new turn. It became less Socialist in character and more concerned with immediate problems—wages and hours of labour. In other words, it abandoned Owen's ideal of working for a changed industrial world, where cut-throat competition should be no more; it confined itself to fighting those who actually did control industry. The amalgamated Society of Engineers (1851) came to be regarded as the 'new model' for trades unions; it aimed at raising the standard of wages, and insisting on the employment of skilled men and Union men. An offshoot of the trade union activity was the Co-operative Movement, begun by some Rochdale men, who opened a shop in Toad (t'owd) Lane under the name of the Rochdale Pioneers (1844). From this small beginning arose the Co-operative Movement, which has assumed such enormous proportions in the course of a century. Its chief aim was to share the profits of business among its customers.

Chartism We must now turn to another working-class effort, which the peculiar misery of the 1830-50 period produced—Chartism. Unlike Socialism, Chartism did not aim at altering the conditions of industry. It was a *political* movement, and its chief aim was to make the working man politically the equal of his master. This was made clear from the Six Points of the People's Charter, which gave the movement its name. The Six Points were: annual parliaments, universal manhood suffrage, vote by ballot, no property qualification for M.P.s, payment of Members, and equal electoral districts. It is noteworthy that all except the first and last of these six points, which seemed so revolutionary at the time, have since become part of the law of the land.<sup>1</sup>

The leaders of the Chartists were William Lovett, a Londoner, and Feargus O'Connor, an Irishman, who addressed his appeal 'to the unshaved chins, the blistered hands, and fustian jackets of the genuine working man'. The policy of the Chartists was to hold large mass meetings in various towns, with the

<sup>1</sup> *Universal Manhood Suffrage* required three Acts—1867 (all town householders), 1884 (all country householders), and 1918 (all other adult males.) *Vote by Ballot* was achieved by the Ballot Act of 1872 for secrecy of voting (Gladstone). *Property Qualification for M.P.s* was abolished in 1858. *Payment of M.P.s* dates from 1911.

object of getting the Government, and the ruling classes generally, to listen to their grievances. Many people expected that mass meetings would be prohibited by Melbourne's Government, but Lord John Russell, in 1838, made a notable declaration on this question. 'The people have a right to meet,' he said. 'It is not from free discussion that governments have anything to fear. There is fear when men are driven by force to secret combinations. *There* is fear, *there* is danger, and not in free discussion.' These words, spoken by an English aristocrat and a great statesman, indicated a trust in the people such as no other government in Europe would have dared to show. With one or two exceptions, the trust was justified. Russell's speech could not, of course, be taken as meaning that the Ministry would tolerate disorder. Chartists met in Birmingham in 1838, where there was a riot in the Bull Ring, followed by the sacking of several shops; and at Newport (Mon.) the Chartists tried to seize the town.<sup>1</sup> In both instances order had to be restored by the military. But the Government certainly showed extraordinary calmness. A petition, drawn up by the Chartists, was seriously considered by Parliament, but rejected.

In the 'forties, Chartism was still a force in England. Another monster petition, signed by three million persons, was presented and rejected. In 1842 a general strike was proclaimed, and Peel's Government arrested several hundred Chartist and Trade Union leaders; 500 of them were imprisoned. This action really broke up Chartism, but in 1848 there was a last flash of the old fire. It was the year of the fall of Metternich, of the Third French Revolution, and of revolutions all over Italy and Germany.<sup>2</sup> Feargus O'Connor thought it would be a suitable moment to organize a demonstration; Russell, who had permitted the meetings of 1839, was now Premier. Another petition was drawn up, said to be signed by five million persons;

<sup>1</sup> Miners from the neighbouring villages marched on Newport, where the Mayor, with a small force of troops, took up his head-quarters at the Westgate Hotel. The Chartists were armed, and fired into the hotel. The Mayor, a courageous man, read the Riot Act, while the bullets were whistling round him. Not until after that did he order the soldiers to fire. They did so with deadly effect; 20 Chartists were killed, many wounded, and the rest fled in confusion.

<sup>2</sup> See next chapter.

The end  
of Chartism  
1848

O'Connor boasted that half a million men would bring it to the House of Commons. But the Government forbade the procession; and the great petition was ignominiously carried to the House in a cab. There it was examined and found to contain not five million, but less than two million signatures, some of which were plainly fictitious and had been added in malice or in jest.<sup>1</sup> The ridicule which greeted this discovery was the death-blow of Chartism, which shortly afterwards faded out of existence. Some of the ills which the Chartists had sought to cure remained, but the 'hungry 'forties' were drawing to their close, and in the 'fifties the lot of the working classes somewhat improved.

#### THE CHIEF FACTORY ACTS

- 1802. Sir Robert Peel's Act. Applied to apprentices only. Hours of labour, for apprentice children, restricted to 12 per day, and night work for children to be discontinued. Factories to be whitewashed and ventilated. J.P.s to appoint inspectors, from among themselves, to see that the Act was enforced.
- 1819. Applied to cotton-mills only. Employment of children under 9 prohibited. Work of young persons under 16 limited to 69 hours a week.
- 1833. Althorp's Act. Employment of all children under 9 prohibited. Work of young persons under 18 limited to 12 hours a day. Government Inspectors appointed.
- 1844. Women included in the same category as young persons. Machinery to be safeguarded. No woman or young person to clean machines while in motion.
- 1847. Ten Hours Act. Work of women and young persons limited to 10 hours a day.
- 1867. Factory Acts Extension Act. Powers of Inspectors increased. Restrictions on employment of women and children in dangerous trades.
- 1878. Cross's Consolidating Act. 45 Acts compressed within one statute.
- 1891. Protection of women and children in 'sweated' trades.
- 1901. Consolidating Act. Further regulations—sanitary conditions, safeguarding of machinery, &c.

<sup>1</sup> Such names as 'Queen Victoria' or 'Wellington' were found affixed to the petition, while some had signed themselves 'Pug Nose', 'Flat Nose', or 'No Cheese'.

## XXXVIII

### PALMERSTON'S ENGLAND

#### 1. *The Arbiter of Europe*

DURING the half-century which followed the battle of Waterloo Great Britain held a remarkable position in Europe. Her prestige, the legacy of the Napoleonic War, was enormous; no Power, with the single exception of Russia, ventured to challenge her during this period. In the greater world outside Europe, Britain, with her unbeaten Navy, towered above all rivals. The United States was still in the growing stage; the race of rival European empires had not yet begun. The half-century *after* 1865 presents a striking contrast with the earlier era; then the power of Britain, though still unshaken, was seriously challenged, especially by the rising might of Germany under Prussian headship. Prussia obtained the leadership of Germany in 1866, after which the situation in Europe was entirely altered. This was a year after Lord Palmerston's death.

The career of Henry Temple, Viscount Palmerston (1784-1865), covers the whole of the earlier half-century mentioned above. His public record was a remarkable one—sixty years in public life, fifty of them spent in office. He was a minister at twenty-three (1807); he died in harness at eighty-one. He began his career as a Tory, and was Secretary-at-War to various Tory governments till he left Wellington to join the Whigs (1828). In 1830 he accepted the Foreign Office under Grey, and, except for three interruptions, he guided the foreign policy of Britain till his death thirty-five years later.<sup>1</sup> In the present chapter we shall trace Britain's part in world affairs during this Palmerstonian Era.

Palmerston's attitude as British Foreign Secretary was based on a thorough understanding of his own countrymen,

<sup>1</sup> Palmerston was Foreign Secretary to the Grey and Melbourne Ministries, 1830-41, and to Russell, 1846-51; Home Secretary, 1853-5; Prime Minister with control over foreign affairs, 1855-8 and 1859-65.

coupled with a good-natured, but none the less irritating, contempt of all other nations. He held that whatever happened in Europe was some concern of ours; he could not let an important occasion—a royal marriage, a projected war, a revolution—pass without at least favouring the parties concerned with his advice. Sometimes he did more, for he was prepared to back British interests in all parts of the world, from the Pacific to the Mediterranean. It goes without saying that *ce terrible milord Palmerston*, as the French called him, was disliked and feared in most European capitals. But Palmerston did not care very much for foreign opinion. Above all, he disliked and distrusted foreign despotisms, like Austria and Russia, and in this he expressed, as in much else, the thoughts of the average Englishman. His countrymen loved and admired him, and there was no more popular figure in London than old 'Pam', in his fashionable clothes and dyed whiskers, riding his grey mare down Pall Mall. Yet popularity is seldom a good standard by which to judge foreign policy; and many of Palmerston's spectacular strokes were dangerous to Britain and unjust to other countries.

Belgian  
neutrality  
1839

Palmerston's first concern, as Foreign Secretary, was the question of Belgium. As we have seen,<sup>1</sup> the Belgians revolted from Dutch rule in 1830, and in the following year Palmerston called a Conference of the Powers in London, which recognized Belgian independence (1831), with Leopold of Saxe-Coburg (uncle of Queen Victoria) as first king of the Belgians.<sup>2</sup> It took another eight years to persuade the Dutch to abandon their claims, but by the Treaty of London (1839), Britain, France, Austria, Russia, and Prussia fixed, with the consent of Holland, the boundaries of the new state. At the same time, all five Great Powers guaranteed the neutrality of Belgium.<sup>3</sup>

Not long after this Palmerston intervened in the affairs of

<sup>1</sup> Above, p. 792.

<sup>2</sup> Leopold had been married to Charlotte, daughter of George IV, and would have been the Prince Consort in Britain but for Charlotte's untimely death (1817).

<sup>3</sup> This neutrality was respected till 1914, though the French, especially in the 'sixties, several times came very near to breaking it. In 1914 this treaty was broken by the German Government, an act which hastened Britain's entry into the Great War.



the Near East. Here his attitude was based on suspicion of, and consequently hostility to, Russia; and hostility to Russia meant aiding the Turks, on whose territories the Tsars had designs.<sup>1</sup> Palmerston's anti-Russian policy was followed by most British statesmen for the rest of the century. Britain, through her fear of Russia, thus 'bolstered up' the decaying Turkish power, with all its attendant evils.<sup>2</sup>

In the 'thirties the stormy petrel of the Near East was Mehemet Ali, the sultan's vice-regent in Egypt. Mehemet Ali revolted against his overlord, Sultan Mahmud, and invaded Asia Minor; Constantinople was saved only by Russian intervention (1833). In return for his help, the Tsar Nicholas I (1825-55) got the sultan to agree to close the Dardanelles to all foreign warships except those of Russia (Treaty of Unkiar Skelessi, 1833). Six years later Mehemet Ali was again in revolt, and again the Tsar wanted to intervene. But Palmerston declared that this was a matter for all the Powers to deal with. The French, who favoured Mehemet Ali, refused to join in, and threatened to interfere on the opposite side. 'Convey to him [M. Thiers]', said Palmerston, writing to the British Ambassador, 'in the most friendly and inoffensive manner possible, that if France throws down the gauntlet we shall not refuse to pick it up.' In spite of French hostility, Palmerston announced that he would, if necessary, 'chuck Mehemet Ali into the Nile'. Sir Charles Napier was sent to Syria, where he defeated the Egyptian army and captured Acre. Next year the French Government, whose passions had cooled down, joined with Britain, Russia, Austria, and Prussia—the same Powers who had signed the Belgian treaty—to sign another Treaty of London, which stated that no foreign warships should pass through the Dardanelles while Turkey was at peace.<sup>3</sup> Palmerston had thus completely upset the Russian schemes of

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 792.

<sup>2</sup> See also the later aspects of the same question, 1853 (p. 834) and 1876-8 (p. 883).

<sup>3</sup> This treaty was not effective. It was first broken in 1853, when British and French warships passed through the Dardanelles before Turkey had declared war on Russia. It was broken again in August 1914 when German warships passed through to the Black Sea, before Turkey had declared war on Britain.

controlling the Dardanelles, or of establishing sole control at Constantinople.

While this affair was proceeding, Britain was also embroiled in the Far East. The East India Company had for many years attempted to trade with China, in spite of the Chinese dislike of the presence of foreign 'barbarians' on the soil of the Celestial Empire. An important item of this trade was the import of Indian-grown opium, prohibited by the Chinese Government, but nevertheless smuggled into various Chinese ports. In 1833 the monopoly of the East India Company was abolished and a great many British traders went to China. The Peking Government determined to suppress the opium trade, and to discourage foreigners altogether; a mandarin was sent down with orders to imprison the insolent intruders and seize their goods, which he did. When Palmerston heard this news, he at once took vigorous action; he sent an armed expedition up the Canton River. The war which followed (1840-2) was completely successful, and the Chinese at length signed the Treaty of Nanking (1842), an important landmark in the history of the East, since it opened China to European trade. Five Treaty Ports<sup>1</sup> were opened to foreign vessels, and Hong Kong was ceded outright to England. The Chinese had to pay an indemnity for the late war.

Chinese War  
1840-42

Treaty of  
Nanking  
and cession  
of Hong  
Kong, 1842

The Prince  
Consort

Meanwhile, in England, a new star had appeared on the horizon. In 1840 Queen Victoria married her cousin, Prince Albert of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha.<sup>2</sup> The Prince Consort, as he was called, was a serious-minded young man, who believed that he had a mission to fulfil in England, and who wielded all the powers of the Crown through his adoring wife. The Prince was a serious student of politics, and he was anxious to see that the powers of the Crown, which were still considerable, were carefully exercised and rigidly preserved. His main interest was in foreign affairs, and this soon brought him into conflict with Palmerston. At the same time Palmerston, grown more confident than ever with the passage of years, began to behave as though he alone controlled British foreign policy. He often failed to inform his colleagues in the Cabinet, even the Prime

Palmerston  
and  
Russell  
1846-51

<sup>1</sup> Canton, Amoy, Foochow, Ningpo, and Shanghai.

<sup>2</sup> For their family, see Table, p. 814.

Minister, of what he was doing, and he considered that the royal interest in his department was entirely misplaced. Not once but many times, Palmerston promised to show the queen all foreign dispatches; it was no use—even if he showed them to her, he frequently altered them afterwards.<sup>1</sup> The Premier, Lord John Russell, sympathized with the royal complaints, but the masterful Foreign Secretary went on his way. He was more popular in the country than Lord John, and he knew it. As for the prince, he was despised by 'Society' for his intelligence, and suspected by the populace for his German birth and sympathies. Nevertheless, when Palmerston and the prince disagreed, the prince was generally right, and Palmerston wrong.

In 1848 revolutions broke out all over Europe. Louis-Philippe, King of the French, was deposed, and the Second French Republic set up. A month later Metternich was overthrown by revolution in Vienna (from which he escaped concealed in a laundry cart), which soon spread all over Austria and Hungary. Germany, too, was affected, and the Liberals there made an attempt to establish a democracy. Again, in Italy, Venice and the Lombard cities threw off the yoke of the hated Austrian; the Italian heroes, Garibaldi and Mazzini, formed the Roman Republic (1849). Palmerston was delighted at the spectacle of the continental despots flying for their lives; his attitude horrified the queen and Prince Albert. '*What a figure we cut*', wrote Victoria in a letter; '*really it is quite immoral, with Ireland quivering in our grasp—for us to force Austria to give up her lawful possessions. What shall we say if Canada, Malta etc. begin to trouble us?*'

The year  
of revolutions,  
1848

But the success of the 1848 revolutions was short-lived. The Tsar sent an army to help Austria crush the Hungarian patriots; the revolution in Germany was a failure, and merely prepared

The revolutions  
suppressed  
1849-51

<sup>1</sup> In 1850, the Queen sent a Memorandum to Russell, requesting that it should be shown to Palmerston. She required (i) that the Foreign Secretary should distinctly state his intentions, in any given case, to the Queen; (ii) that, once she had given her sanction, the decision should not be arbitrarily altered by the minister. Palmerston agreed to this; in fact, he was so patently in the wrong that he could do nothing else. But he soon fell into his old ways again, probably out of sheer carelessness, rather than disrespect for the Crown.

the way for the triumph of Prussia.<sup>1</sup> The tide soon turned in Italy too. The Lombard rebellion was crushed by the Austrian armies (1848), and next year President Louis Napoleon sent a French army to turn Garibaldi out of Rome.<sup>2</sup> The British Government took no steps to check the course of the reaction, but Lord Palmerston could scarcely contain his indignation when the brutal Austrian generals stamped out the rebellion in blood. He did his best to encourage the Italians and Hungarians to resist, but their resistance was in vain, and his encouragement was therefore unwise, since he raised their hopes without being able to fulfil them. Two incidents brought out Palmerston's attitude clearly. At the end of 1850 the Austrian general, Haynau—fresh from his Hungarian triumphs, from the merciless suppression of rebellion, from the shooting of men and the flogging of women—arrived in England. While in London, he paid a visit to Messrs. Barclay and Perkins' brewery, and was there assaulted by draymen, punched in the ribs, chased by an angry crowd yelling 'Hyena', and driven into the shelter of a public-house, whence he was rescued by the police. Palmerston had to apologize to the Austrian ambassador for this incident, but he did so with an ill grace. Writing privately to another minister he said: 'Instead of striking him, they [the draymen] should have tossed him in a blanket, rolled him in the kennel, and then sent him home in a cab.' Just a year later a very different visitor appeared in England—Kossuth, the Hungarian national hero, now in exile. Palmerston wanted to receive him at his house, and was only prevented by the Premier from doing so.<sup>3</sup> But the public understood where Lord Palmerston's sympathies lay.

Palmer-  
ston's  
attitude

Marshal  
Haynau

<sup>1</sup> See below, pp. 845-6 and 876.

<sup>2</sup> It is said that Palmerston, in 1849, was asked the difference between business and occupation. He replied that the French were in occupation of Rome, but that they had no business to be there! (For Louis Napoleon, see below, p. 832.)

<sup>3</sup> At first Palmerston refused to accede to Russell's request, and wrote to him as follows: 'I do not choose to be dictated to as to who I may or may not receive in my own house; and I shall use my own discretion on this matter. You will, of course, use yours as to the composition of your Government.' A little later Palmerston received a deputation of Radicals at the Foreign Office. These gentlemen described the Emperors

Palmerston scored another personal triumph about this time over the case of Don Pacifico, a Portuguese Jew, born in Malta, and therefore a British subject. He was doing business in Athens, where his house was broken into and his property damaged by a Greek mob. He complained to the British Foreign Office that he could get no justice in Athens and Palmerston took up the case. Getting no satisfaction out of the Greek Government, he eventually sent Sir William Parker with a British fleet to seize the Greek vessels lying off Athens. This high-handed action nearly involved us in a war with France and Russia and was severely censured in England itself. But Palmerston defended his action, and his whole foreign policy, in a masterly speech in the Commons, lasting from the dusk of one day to the dawn of another (it was 24 June). He ended by citing the old Roman boast, *Civis Romanus sum*, and claimed as proud a motto for a subject of Britain, who might expect protection from the watchful eye and strong arm of his country. The speech was a huge success; Palmerston triumphed once more over all his foes, including Peel, who made his last speech in this debate. But Peel's words, spoken a few hours before his fatal accident, might serve as a warning to a too-confident England. They were also a very just criticism of Palmerston's whole method.

'Diplomacy', said Peel, 'is a costly engine for maintaining peace, a remarkable instrument used by civilized nations for the purpose of preventing war. Unless it be used to appease the angry passions of individual men, and check the feelings which arise out of national resentment, it is an instrument not only costly but mischievous. If your application be to fester every wound . . . to place a minister in every Court of Europe for the purpose not of preventing quarrel, but for the purpose of . . . promoting what is supposed to be an English interest by keeping up conflicts with other Powers, then I say that . . . the great engine used by civilized society for the purpose of maintaining peace is perverted into a cause of hostility and war.'

A year later Palmerston made one of his few mistakes in of Austria and Russia as despots, tyrants, and odious assassins. Palmerston mildly protested against this language, but it was obvious that he really approved of it.

tactics. Louis Napoleon, nephew of the great emperor, had been made President of the French Republic. He suddenly seized supreme power in France, acting on the model of his uncle's *coup d'état* of 1799. This *coup* (Dec. 1851) proved to be the prelude to the Second Empire (1852-70), when Louis Napoleon became the Emperor Napoleon III. Palmerston detested Republicans, and was glad to see them put down, so he indiscreetly expressed to the French Ambassador his approval of the *coup*. He followed this up with a letter to the British Ambassador in Paris; this letter he showed neither to the queen nor to the Prime Minister. On this occasion Palmerston, in approving the *coup*, had adopted a point of view opposed to that of his old ally, the British public. Lord John Russell, his patience exhausted, took this excellent opportunity to dismiss his Foreign Secretary. The Cabinet approved, and the queen and the Prince Consort were overjoyed. But they had not yet finished with Lord Palmerston.

France—  
*coup d'état*  
1851

Dismissal  
of Palmer-  
ston, 1851

## 2. *The Eastern Question and the Crimean War*

Lord John Russell's Ministry endured only a few months after the fall of Palmerston. In 1852, the two Opposition parties—Conservatives and Peelites—with Palmerston's help, brought about the fall of the Whig Government. Lord Derby,<sup>1</sup> the Conservative leader, now formed his first Ministry. The Peelites would not join the Government, and the Conservatives were so weak in experienced statesmen that only one member of the Ministry besides the Prime Minister had ever sat in a Cabinet before. Benjamin Disraeli entered the Cabinet for the first time, as Chancellor of the Exchequer. This Ministry, which endured only till the end of the year 1852, accomplished little. The chief event of the year was the death of Wellington.

First Derby  
Ministry  
1852

In Wellington Britain lost her national hero. The old Duke,

<sup>1</sup> Edward Stanley, 14th Earl of Derby, born 1799. Colonial Secretary to the Whig Government in 1833, and so responsible for the Act abolishing Slavery. Left the Whigs 1834. Joined the Conservatives, and was Colonial Secretary to Peel, 1841. Refused to support Peel in '46, and so became leader of the Conservatives (Protectionists) after the Peelite split. Three times Prime Minister of England: 1852; 1858-9; 1866-8. None of his ministries lasted two years. Died 1869.

eighty-three years of age, passed at last from the scene in which he had long been the most admired figure. There had never been anything to compare with Wellington's position in British life, and there has been nothing like it since. At forty-six he had the highest military reputation in Europe, but he never after then (1815) engaged in war. Lord Derby truly said that the British people had buried in their illustrious hero the man among them who had the greatest horror of war. Wellington received the plaudits of 1815 with modesty; he received the threats and jeers of 1832 with indifference. His only desire as a statesman was to do his duty, and his duty led him into strange paths. He was a Tory of the old school; but he enabled the Reform Bill and the Repeal of the Corn Laws to be passed through the House of Lords, and he was the only man who could have done so. In his later years the public had forgotten their anger over the Reform Bill; the Duke was venerated by high and low with a feeling little short of idolatry. He died; and the whole nation mourned, believing that no other man could ever fill the place of the Great Duke.

Death of  
the Duke  
of Welling-  
ton, 1852

Derby's Government was overthrown by a combination of Whigs and Peelites; and it was a coalition Government, formed from these two parties, which now took office. The ministry contained, as Palmerston said, every man of the first rank in the House of Commons, except Mr. Disraeli. The Prime Minister, Lord Aberdeen, who had been Peel's Foreign Secretary, was now a man of sixty-eight. He was a Scottish nobleman and a Presbyterian, a man of sterling character and a lover of peace. Gladstone, who became Chancellor of the Exchequer, was another Peelite. The chief Whigs were Lord John Russell, who took the Foreign Office,<sup>1</sup> and Palmerston, who became Home Secretary.<sup>2</sup> Yet this brilliant ministry, with its peace-loving Premier, soon drifted into a disastrous war, and, within three years, collapsed in disgrace.

Aberdeen's  
Coalition  
Ministry  
1852-5

The causes of the Crimean War were complex. The main factors were the decline of the Turkish Empire, the determina-

The Eastern  
Question

<sup>1</sup> He resigned the Foreign Office after a short time, but remained in the Cabinet.

<sup>2</sup> Palmerston is generally classified as a Whig, though he never fell into any regular party group after the Canningite split.

tion of Russia to take advantage of that decline, and the decision of Britain and France to oppose the consequent Russian advance. Personal factors played a large part in the drift towards war, and a good deal depended on the character of the chief actors in the drama—the Tsar Nicholas, the Emperor Napoleon III, Lords Aberdeen and Palmerston, and, last but not least, Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, British Ambassador at Constantinople.

Ru 11  
and the  
Balkan. The approaching break-up of the Turkish Empire had long attracted the attention of the Tsar Nicholas I. The Turkish rule, always incompetent and frequently cruel, was maintained over the various Balkan peoples, who had endured four centuries of Ottoman misgovernment. The Greeks had won their independence, and the Rumanians, in the provinces of Wallachia and Moldavia, across the Danube, were partly free from Turkish control. But the other Balkan races—Bulgarians, Serbians, Macedonians—were still under the Sultan's rule, and they naturally looked to Russia for protection and help. Like them, Russia was a Slav country, and like them the Russians belonged to the Greek Orthodox Church.<sup>1</sup> To these feelings the Tsar was quick to respond.

Britain,  
France, and  
Russia. The situation was complicated, however, by the attitude of the Western Powers, Britain and France. Britain feared the advance of Russia, and, throughout the nineteenth century, was always expecting a Russian attack, either in the Mediterranean or on India. Neither attack was ever made; the Russian 'bogy', which lasted so many years, never materialized. Nicholas I was quite open in his opinion that the Turkish Empire could not long survive. In 1844 he had a conversation with Lord Aberdeen (then Foreign Secretary) while on a visit to England, and he repeated the substance of this conversation to the British ambassador in St. Petersburg in 1853. The Tsar's suggestion was that Britain and Russia should combine to ensure that the approaching demise of Turkey—the 'sick man' of Europe—should not cause a European war. Hence the Powers should decide in advance what to do if Turkey collapsed. Britain, Nicholas proposed, might take Egypt and

<sup>1</sup> The Church of the old Byzantine Empire (which fell in 1453) that had once ruled the Balkans.



Crete, and Russia might have Constantinople. The British Cabinet did not follow up this suggestion, and the Tsar did not renew it. About the same time, the French Emperor quarrelled with Russia. Napoleon III (1852-70), a weak man conscious of his weakness, had to do something to deserve, or try to deserve, the name he bore. He began by reviving an old French claim for the guardianship of the Holy Places in Palestine—a Turkish province—which had for many years been in Russian keeping. It was while this dispute, involving the rival claims of the Greek Orthodox Church (as represented by Russia) and the Roman Catholic Church (as represented by France) was in progress that Prince Menschikov was sent to Constantinople to revive the *Russian* claim to protect the Christian subjects of the Sultan in the Balkans.

Events now moved all too swiftly towards war. In June 1853, the Tsar suddenly ordered his armies to occupy the Danubian Provinces (Wallachia and Moldavia); this move, he calculated, would bring the Sultan to reason. It did nothing of the kind, because the Sultan had been encouraged (perhaps by Lord Stratford de Redcliffe<sup>1</sup>) to believe that the Western Powers would support him. Nevertheless, a conference was called at Vienna to try to arrange a peaceable settlement. The Tsar seemed willing to accept the mediation of the Powers, provided the Sultan would agree to some form of protection for the Balkan Christians. But the Sultan rejected the terms which had been agreed upon by all the great Powers of Europe, renewed the quarrel with Russia, and finally declared war (Oct. 1853). A war fever soon raged in England. There was in this country a quite genuine hatred of Nicholas I, as the representative of all that Englishmen most detested—despotic government, combined with the cruel suppression of popular risings, e.g. in Poland and Hungary. Even Mr. Gladstone, who certainly hated war, thought that Russia was defying Europe, and that it was the duty of Europe to uphold public law against aggressive violence. The war campaign in the press knew no bounds. The Prince Consort, because he was a foreigner, was

Last  
efforts for  
peace

War fever  
in England

<sup>1</sup> Lord Aberdeen afterwards complained that the British ambassador had acted 'dishonestly'—that he had been told to restrain the Sultan, but that he secretly encouraged him.

suspected, quite unjustly, of being pro-Russian. The most scurrilous campaign was launched against him, and it was even believed that the Government had sent him to the Tower!

In March 1854, Britain and France demanded the withdrawal of the Russian forces from the Principalities; on Russia's refusal they declared war. Soon afterwards, Russia actually withdrew from the Danube, and peace, in a more sensible state of public opinion, might have been made. It was resolved, however, to teach Russia a lesson, and for this purpose an Anglo-French attack on Sebastopol, in the Crimea, was planned. The Crimean War, thus begun, was conducted, on the British side at least, with the grossest incompetence. The strategy of the campaign was poor in the extreme, and the provisions for the sick and wounded practically non-existent. On 20 September the British and French, having landed, won the battle of Alma, to the north of Sebastopol. After this they might have entered the city from the north; the French insisted, however, on the allies' marching round to the south and encamping there (at Balaklava). The Russians were thus enabled to throw up defensive works which held the allies at bay for another twelve months; time was also left for the enemy forces to be increased from 40,000 to 100,000 men.

The siege of Sebastopol (September 1854–September 1855) was continued throughout the horrors of that winter. The Russians, feeling strong enough to assume the offensive, launched two counter-attacks, both of which were repulsed. The attack on the British line at Balaklava (25 October) will be remembered for the splendid but useless charge (immortalized by Tennyson) of the Light Brigade, led by Lord Cardigan, of which the French said, 'C'est magnifique, mais ce n'est pas la guerre'. On 5 November the Russians again attacked at Inkerman, but were again driven back. A week later a great storm burst over Sebastopol, turning the wretched roads in the district into quagmires, and levelling the British tents to the ground. Cholera raged in the army, and the men also endured ghastly sufferings from the extreme cold.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> There were 20,000 British soldiers in action on the Crimean front; another 20,000 were in hospital, and of this number 9,000 died, chiefly through neglect and bad management.

The sufferings of the sick and wounded, not only on the battlefield but in the transports across the Black Sea and in the hospital at Scutari (opposite Constantinople) were made known to the public at home chiefly through the energy of Russell, *The Times* correspondent. Writing from Scutari (12 October), Russell said:

'Not only are there not sufficient surgeons—that, it might be urged, was unavoidable—not only are there no dressers or nurses—that might be a defect of the system, for which no one is to blame;—but what will be said when it is known that there is not even linen to make bandages for the wounded? After the troops have been six months in the country, there is no preparation for the commonest surgical operation. Not only are the men kept, in some cases, for a week without the hand of a medical man coming near their wounds,—not only are they left to expire in agony, unheeded . . . but now, when they are placed in the spacious building, it is found that the commonest appliances of a workhouse sick-ward are wanting.'

And a week later he wrote in indignation:

'The manner in which the sick and wounded have been treated is worthy only of the savages of Dahomey.'

That these horrors were at length ended, that relief was brought to the suffering, was due, in great measure, to the work of one woman, Florence Nightingale. Miss Nightingale took out a band of trained nurses, and she and they worked unceasingly. But nursing was only one of her achievements. She reorganized the hospital—doctors, nurses, and staff. She had supplies of mattresses, sheets, bandages, soap, and towels—everything that the 'official mind' had overlooked or lost—sent out from England, partly at private expense. She bent the protesting officials to her will, and hers was a will of iron; she brought order out of chaos, she restored hope. The death-rate at Scutari was reduced from 420 to 22 per thousand.

Miss Nightingale's work was really the beginning of the Red Cross movement. The rest of her long life (she died in 1907) was devoted to the organization of nursing. The medical department in the Army never forgot the lesson it learnt at the

The  
hospital  
at Scutari

Florence  
Nightingale

Results of  
her work

hands of a woman, and the horrors of the Scutari hospital were never repeated. In civil life Miss Nightingale's example was of enormous value. In her youth her parents had treated as absurd the idea that a woman should have a career, like a man. But she got her own way; and her splendid success silenced the critics and prepared the way for the changes that have taken place since her day not only in nursing but in the whole position of women.

Palmer-  
ston's  
First  
Ministry  
1855-8 The Aberdeen Government could not long survive the shock of the revelations of *The Times*, nor the public demand for a change of ministry. It was defeated in the House (January 1855) and the Premier at once resigned. Lord Palmerston, the hero of the public, took his place. A few weeks later Britain rejoiced to hear of the death of the Tsar Nicholas.<sup>1</sup>

Death of  
the 'Tsar' Sebastopol fell in September 1855, and in the following spring the combatants agreed to make peace. The Treaty of Paris (1856) affirmed the 'integrity' of the Turkish Empire, and declared that no flag of war should appear on the Black Sea. The Straits were closed to all warships. Part of Bessarabia was taken away from Russia. Finally the 'generous intentions' of the Sultan towards his Christian subjects were recognized. This treaty was as futile as the war which preceded it. The Sultan took no notice whatever of his promise to improve his government in the Balkans. The Russians, for their part, took the first opportunity of tearing up that part of the treaty relating to the neutrality of the Black Sea; this opportunity occurred in 1870. Nor did the Powers who signed the Treaty of Paris<sup>2</sup> long maintain the 'integrity' of the Turkish Empire, which was further disrupted in another twenty years.

Treaty of  
Paris, 1856

<sup>1</sup> The Tsar had boasted that his 'generals' January and February would beat the allies, little dreaming that he himself would succumb to a chill caught in February. *Punch* published a savage cartoon (by John Leech) called 'General Février turned traitor', which shows only too plainly the unchivalrous sentiments that are sometimes produced by war—chiefly among those not actually engaged in fighting.

<sup>2</sup> Quite as important as the Treaty was the Declaration of Paris (1856), which made a great advance in defining sea-law. (Privateering abolished; the neutral flag covers enemy's goods except munitions and materials of war, &c.)

3. *Cavour; Lincoln; Bismarck*

For ten years after the Crimean War, Britain, under Palmerston, remained peaceful and prosperous. The quietness of the English scene contrasted strangely with events abroad. It was in the sixties that Italy was made a nation, that Prussia acquired the leadership of Germany, and that the struggle for the Union was fought out in America. The wars which accompanied these upheavals—the Wars of Liberation in Italy (1859–60), the Danish and Austrian Wars with Prussia (1864–6), and the American Civil War (1861–5)—all found strong partisans in this country, but Britain took no part in them.

A stormy  
decade in  
Europe  
1856–66

The outbreak of the Indian Mutiny (1857), which is described in the next chapter, followed close on the end of the Crimean War; its quick suppression did much to strengthen the position of the Government. But Palmerston's first Ministry (1855–8) ended in a curious fashion. Although standing for what was called the *Civis Romanus* policy, he was actually accused of subservience to a foreign Government. In January 1858 an attempt was made on the life of the Emperor Napoleon by an Italian named Orsini. The attempt was foiled, and it was afterwards discovered that the would-be assassins had hatched their plot in England, and even that the bombs had been made in Birmingham. The French were furious, and Count Walewski, their Foreign Minister, complained that England was sheltering criminals who were a menace to humanity. The Government thought it wise not to reply to Walewski's dispatch, but, to appease French opinion, they introduced a Conspiracy to Murder Bill, aimed at criminals like Orsini. But they had forgotten English opinion, which was inflamed by the language used against us in France. A motion hostile to the Government was carried in the Commons, and Palmerston resigned.

The Orsini  
Plot, 1858

Palmerston  
resigns  
1858

The chief work of the Second Derby Ministry (March 1858–June 1859) was to pass a Government of India Bill, which brought the old East India Company to an end. The Governor-General, henceforth called the Viceroy, was directly responsible to the Secretary of State for India, the member of the Cabinet put in charge of Indian affairs. Later in the year the Queen's Proclamation, issued at Allahabad, announced the change to

Second  
Derby  
Ministry  
1858–9

India Bill 1858 the people of India. The wise phrasing of this Proclamation<sup>1</sup> was the work of Lord Derby himself, and has been described as a 'perfect specimen of English as it ought to be written by a great statesman on a great occasion'.

Palmerston's Second Ministry 1859-65 Palmerston regained power next year, and his second Ministry was joined by Mr. Gladstone, who had been out of office since the fall of Lord Aberdeen. Gladstone's acceptance of office—as Chancellor of the Exchequer—marks the final merging of the Peelites and Whigs. The party remained predominantly Whig as long as Palmerston lived; there was bound to be a change whenever Gladstone took the helm. 'There will be strange doings when he [Gladstone] gets my place,' remarked Lord Palmerston. Lord John Russell (who went to the Lords as Earl Russell in 1861) became Foreign Secretary. The 'Triumvirate', as the alliance of Palmerston, Russell, and Gladstone was called, worked well and ruled Britain for the next six years.

Italy The new Government took office just as the fate of Italy was being decided. For more than a thousand years the land of Italy had been parcelled out into a number of independent states, some of which, like Venice and Florence, had played a great part in history. But in the nineteenth century most of these states were very badly governed, especially the Papal States and the Kingdom of Naples; Venice and Lombardy were provinces of the Austrian Empire. It was the twofold object of Italian patriots, like Mazzini, to free North Italy from the Austrian yoke, and to unite all the Italian states together into one free country.

British sympathy with Italy With this great movement the three statesmen who controlled British policy were in hearty sympathy. Gladstone had already earned the hatred of the odious government of Naples by exposing, in the British press, the horrors of the Neapolitan prisons.<sup>2</sup> When the first attempt at Italian unity was made

<sup>1</sup> See below, p. 865.

<sup>2</sup> Gladstone spent the winter of 1850-1 in Naples, and he exposed what he saw there in a famous letter to Lord Aberdeen, which appeared in the English press. Gladstone visited the Neapolitan prisons, where King 'Bomba' kept his political prisoners under the most horrible and degrading conditions. The noble Poerio, whose only crime was that he

(1848-9) Lord Palmerston never concealed his sympathy with the rebels, and in this matter Lord John Russell entirely agreed with him. So did the mass of Englishmen.

The chief architect of Italian liberty was Count Cavour, <sup>Cavour</sup> Prime Minister of Sardinia-Piedmont (see map, p. 846). It was Cavour who enlisted the aid of Napoleon III in a war against Austria, which resulted in the freeing of Lombardy (1859), and would have freed Venetia, too, had not Napoleon deserted his Sardinian allies and backed out at the critical moment. But next year Garibaldi sailed from Genoa with his famous <sup>Garibaldi</sup> 'Thousand', and landed in Sicily. The Sicilians flocked to the hero's standard, and soon the island was lost to the King of Naples. The French suggested that an Anglo-French fleet should prevent Garibaldi's passage to the mainland, but Palmerston and Russell absolutely refused to countenance the suggestion. Garibaldi therefore crossed to Naples unhindered, and conquered the kingdom; the king fled. This was the decisive moment for Cavour to intervene. The King of Sardinia was proclaimed King of Italy at Naples (1860), and at the same time the Sardinians invaded the Papal States. Italy was thus united under King Victor Emmanuel II, except that <sup>Union of Italy, 1860</sup> Austria still held Venetia (till 1866) and that part of the Papal States remained independent (till 1870).<sup>1</sup>

These events were followed with the wildest enthusiasm in England, where the cause of despots like the King of Naples <sup>English approval</sup> had scarcely a friend. Lord John Russell, in a dispatch to the British Ambassador in Turin, said that the British Government could see no cause for the censure with which other governments (e.g. France and Austria) had visited the acts of the King of Sardinia . . . 'Her Majesty's Government turn their eyes rather to the gratifying prospect of a people building up the edifice of their liberties . . . amid the sympathies and good wishes of Europe.' This dispatch infuriated the aforesaid governments, and greatly displeased Queen Victoria, who disliked any revolutions against established governments. But all England approved, and all Italy rejoiced that the British had opposed the Government, had been kept chained to a murderer. Gladstone's indignation was fully shared by Palmerston.

<sup>1</sup> See pp. 845 and 878. Compare maps, pp. 845 and 882.

Government by its sympathetic attitude had helped a great nation at last to achieve its liberty.<sup>1</sup>

Britain and  
Napoleon  
III

About this time British opinion became violently inflamed against Napoleon III, our late ally in the Crimean War. Napoleon had deserted Sardinia in 1859, but he annexed the town of Nice and the province of Savoy in 1860 as the price of his help. Palmerston, and Britain with him, considered that these places had been unfairly obtained. Cavour had promised Nice and Savoy to France in return for Lombardy and Venetia, to be taken from Austria. Napoleon had prevented the conquest of Venetia, but he argued that the Sardinians had an equivalent, since Tuscany and several small states had joined her, overthrowing their own rulers. But in Britain the emperor became an object of hatred and suspicion. The Volunteers, predecessors of the Territorials, had been reformed in 1858; in the next two years thousands joined them in anticipation of a French war. Cobden,<sup>2</sup> however, did not believe in war. He went over to Paris and, with Gladstone's approval, arranged a Commercial Treaty with France, embodying a measure of Free Trade between the two countries. After this the war clamour calmed down somewhat, but Napoleon III was never regarded with confidence again.

American  
Civil War  
1861-5

Meanwhile the shadow of a greater conflict fell on the American continent. The clash between the Northern and Southern States in America arose over the slavery question. Negro slavery, condemned in the North, was universal in the South, and there formed the basis of a distinctive aristocratic society. The Southerners wished not only to retain slavery, but to extend it into the new states to the north and west. When the Northern States objected, and Lincoln was elected President, the Southerners decided to break away and form a separate republic—called the Confederate States—under the presidency of Jefferson Davis. The American Civil War (1861-5) was fought not directly about slavery, but to decide whether the

<sup>1</sup> 'My dear Uncle,' wrote Mr. Odo Russell from Rome, 'ever since your famous dispatch of the 27th, you are blessed night and morning by twenty millions of Italians. . . . The moment it was published in Italian, thousands of people copied it from each other to carry it to their homes, and weep over it for joy and gratitude.' <sup>2</sup> See above, p. 817.



South had the right to secede from the Union. In 1862 Lincoln proclaimed the freedom of slaves throughout America and the two causes were united. A victory of the South would be a victory for slavery.

In Britain, where the issues of the war were not clearly understood, there was a considerable party in favour of the slave-owning South. The Northerners blockaded the southern ports, and practically brought the Anglo-American cotton trade to a standstill, causing great distress in Lancashire. A section of the public, especially among the upper classes, favoured the South for another reason: the Northerners were regarded as democratic 'Yankees', the Southerners as aristocratic gentlemen. John Bright, Cobden's lieutenant in the fight against the Corn Laws, now took the foremost place among English democratic leaders. He realized that the victory of the North meant the victory of democracy in America—and perhaps in England as well. Lincoln himself proclaimed the ideals for which he lived and died in his famous oration on the battlefield of Gettysburg, when he said that brave men had given their lives in order that 'government of the people, by the people, for the people, should not perish from the earth'.

The British Government remained neutral, though two unfortunate incidents nearly caused war. The first was the *Trent* affair. The Northern authorities stopped a British steamer, the *Trent*, on the high seas, and arrested two Southern agents on board. This was a violation of Britain's neutrality, and the British public were very angry. The Prince Consort, on his death-bed, urged ministers to act with moderation, and eventually, when tempers on both sides had cooled, Lincoln gave back his prisoners. The second incident also concerned a ship. The *Alabama* was a man-of-war, built for the Southern States at Liverpool; the British authorities negligently allowed her to put to sea. This time it was Britain who had been guilty of a breach of neutrality—a breach which cost the North dear, for the *Alabama* waged a deadly war on American commerce for two years. After the war the Americans claimed compensation from Britain for the losses suffered, and the matter dragged on for ten years. Eventually (in 1872) England agreed to go to arbitration, and had to pay over three million pounds damages.

The American Civil War ended after four years of conflict in the complete victory of the North and of the principles which Lincoln had proclaimed. His own life, at the moment of his great triumph, was ended by an assassin's bullet. But he had lived to see slavery abolished and the union of the American States preserved.

While this Civil War was still raging, a more ominous conflict developed in Europe. Prussia, under Bismarck's leadership, strove for and won a leading position in Germany. The first sign of the new Power which was to dominate Europe was seen in 1863. In that year the vexed question of the Schleswig-Holstein duchies was raised. Schleswig and Holstein had for many years been ruled by the King of Denmark; Holstein was completely German and Schleswig partly so. The accession of a new Danish sovereign, Christian IX,<sup>1</sup> a distant cousin of the last king, led to a disputed succession in the duchies. Prussia and Austria supported a German prince as against the new Danish king,<sup>2</sup> and proceeded to bully Denmark into submission (January 1864). Palmerston, in his old vein, declared that if Denmark had to fight she would not fight alone; but the Cabinet would not approve of British interference, and nothing was done. Palmerston, who was eighty years of age, washed his hands of the matter; having given hope to the Danes, he left them to their fate. So the Prussian and Austrian armies overran Denmark, bombarded Copenhagen, and forced the Danes to submit. The duchies were jointly occupied by Austria and Prussia. Next year Bismarck picked a quarrel with Austria and forced her into the Seven Weeks' War (1866). The deadly efficiency of the Prussian army was now demonstrated; Austria was beaten to her knees (battle of Sadowa) and forced to make peace. She lost no territory, except Venetia, which was given to Italy, but was required to retire from the German Confederation. This meant that Prussia was left supreme in Germany;

<sup>1</sup> Father of Alexandra, then Princess of Wales, afterwards queen to Edward VII.

<sup>2</sup> The succession of Prince Christian, both in Denmark and in the duchies, had been arranged by the Treaty of London (1852), signed by Austria, Prussia, France, Russia, and Britain. But, in 1864, Austria and Prussia acted as nominees of the German Diet, which had not accepted the Treaty of London.

Murder of  
Lincoln  
1865

The  
Schleswig-  
Holstein  
question

Danish  
War  
1864-5

Austro-  
Prussian  
War, 1866

the Prussians annexed a number of small states, including Hanover, which had been so misguided as to fight on the Austrian side. Events were soon to prove that Prussia, under



EUROPE IN THE TIME OF PALMERSTON (1815-65)

Note: (i) the extent of the German Confederation up to 1866; (ii) the Union of Italy in 1860; (iii) the troubles in the Near East—the Greek War of Independence, Mehmet Ali's adventures, and the Crimean War.

Bismarck's leadership, had to fight another war before Germany could be finally united.

Lord Palmerston did not live to see this sequel to the Schleswig-Holstein affair. He died in the autumn of 1865, just after he had won his last General Election.

Death of  
Palmerston  
1865

'Others may advise Her Majesty with equal sagacity (wrote *The Times*), and sway the House of Commons with equal or greater eloquence; but his place in the hearts of the people will not be filled so easily. The name of Lord Palmerston, once the terror of the Continent, will long be connected in the minds of Englishmen with an epoch of unbroken peace and unparalleled prosperity, and cherished together with the brightest memories of the reign of Queen Victoria.'

He had been a great figure, and he loved England well, and served her faithfully according to his lights. His death closes an era in home politics, no less than abroad. For in Europe Bismarck took Palmerston's leading place; in England Gladstone guided his country along paths which the old Premier would have hesitated to take.



THE CRIMEAN WAR

Balaclava Harbour, with the British Fleet and transports.  
(From a contemporary photograph.)

## XXXIX

### THE SECOND BRITISH EMPIRE

#### I. *A New Era* (1830-60)

THE First British Empire,<sup>1</sup> founded in the seventeenth century, depended, like others of its kind, on a system of commercial monopoly, which was universally recognized. Thus the British control of India was based on the monopoly (abolished 1833) of the East India Company; that of the West Indies on the Slave Trade (abolished 1807); and that of the Thirteen Colonies and other colonies on the Navigation Acts (modified 1825, abolished 1849). This so-called 'mercantilist' system was not all to the advantage of the mother-country, for the colonies derived important benefits from it, e.g. monopoly or preference for their exports in the British market. The Second British Empire, as we may call it, came into being in the nineteenth century, during the reigns of William IV and Queen Victoria. The old mercantile Empire, based on restriction and slavery, vanished; the modern Empire, based on freedom, took its place.

We saw, in a former chapter,<sup>2</sup> how the foundations of a new colonial policy were laid by Canning and Huskisson, and how those statesmen broke away from the old tradition which regarded the Empire as a sort of partnership in trade, the colonies providing raw materials, and Britain providing the finished products. This valuable start in a new direction was followed up by the Whig ministries of the thirties. Two things stand to the credit of the Whigs: they abolished slavery, and

The Whigs  
and the  
Empire  
1830-40

<sup>1</sup> We may distinguish three periods in the life of the British Empire: the *First Empire* (to 1776), a colonial dependent empire of the old type, like the empires of Spain, Portugal, and France (see Chaps. XIII, XXII, and XXVII); the *Second Empire*, dating from the American Declaration of Independence (1776), largely the creation of the nineteenth century, characterized by the growth of self-government; and the *Third Empire* of to-day, in which the British Empire of 1914 has become 'The British Commonwealth of Nations' (see Chap. XLIV).

<sup>2</sup> Chapter XXXVI.

they set the more advanced colonies—the present Dominions—on the path of self-government.

*The Slave Trade*  
The ending of slavery was a natural corollary to the ending of the old mercantile Empire, which had clung to the British slave-islands in the West Indies as its most valued possessions. Men like Clarkson and Wilberforce, who worked most of their lives to overthrow slavery, had their first great triumph in the Abolition of the Slave Trade (1807).<sup>1</sup> It took another quarter of a century of agitation to free the existing slaves. But Grey's Government passed the Act emancipating the slaves (1833), and Wilberforce lived just long enough to see his great task completed. Twenty million pounds was voted by Parliament as compensation for the losses of the slave-owners, chiefly West Indian planters, but including some Boer farmers in the newly acquired colony of Capetown. In the West Indies the planters regarded the change with alarm. Before Abolition, the British West Indies ranked among the richest colonial territories in the world; but within a generation their relative importance declined until they became practically derelict. This was due partly to the abolition of slavery, especially when Britain allowed the slave-grown sugar of Brazil and Cuba to enter her ports freely. It was due also to the growth of a beet-sugar industry on the continent of Europe, and to growing competition from other parts of the Empire.

*End of slavery in the British Empire*  
1833

*Decline of the West Indies*

*Lord Durham*

*Colonial self-government*

The movement towards self-government owes most to Lord Durham, a prominent member of the Whig Cabinet of 1830. Durham, who was sent out to Canada in 1838, was the originator of a policy which has since been followed in other parts of the British Empire. His famous Report (1839), which dealt with Canadian problems, advocated, among other things, the granting of self-government to the British colonies in North America. This great step was actually taken in Canada a few years later under the governorship of Durham's son-in-law, Lord Elgin, who took office in 1846. Between 1846 and 1860 no less than ten British colonies—four in North America and six in Australasia—were granted self-government;<sup>2</sup> Cape Colony followed somewhat later, in 1872.

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 716.

<sup>2</sup> The colonies were: *In America*: The United Provinces of Canada

At the same time that Britain thus gave up political control of the mainly English-speaking colonies, the last vestiges of commercial control were swept away. Huskisson had partly repealed the Navigation Laws (1825), and what remained of them was abolished by the Russell Government (1849). At the same time the Repeal of the Corn Laws (1846), and Gladstone's Budgets in the next dozen years, made England a Free Trade country. It was expected that the Empire would also remain a Free Trade empire. This, however, was not to be. Since the colonies had political freedom, there was nothing to prevent them from imposing tariffs of their own, even against Britain. This is actually what happened, beginning with Canada in 1859.

Lord Durham was accompanied to Canada by his friend and adviser Edward Gibbon Wakefield, a Radical reformer, and an enthusiast for colonization. Gibbon Wakefield, after a somewhat chequered career, including three years' imprisonment for abducting an heiress, spent many years in advocating 'systematic' colonization. He founded, in 1830, a Colonization Society, and through this he was brought into contact with Durham. Wakefield was a great man, whose influence was widely felt. He believed that our colonies in Canada and Australia were great nations in embryo, and ought not to be treated either as trading-posts or as dumping-grounds for criminals. It was largely due to him that new colonies were planted in South Australia and New Zealand.<sup>1</sup>

Thus, by almost imperceptible degrees, the new Empire was founded, on principles so different from the old. The influence of such men as Durham and Wakefield did not, however, last into the next generation. It is probable that the granting of self-government to the colonies in the 'fifties was the result of indifference rather than policy. It was generally felt, and often declared, that the colonies would break away from the Empire when they were ready to do so. Richard Cobden said that Free Trade had loosened the bonds of empire, and rejoiced in the fact; he thought that colonies were the chief source of war.

(i.e. Quebec and Ontario), Nova Scotia, Newfoundland, New Brunswick. In *Australasia*: New South Wales, Victoria, Tasmania, Queensland, South Australia, New Zealand.

<sup>1</sup> See below, p. 855.

Even Disraeli, who changed his opinion later on, was talking (in 1852) about 'these wretched colonies' which were 'like millstones round our necks', and which would be certain to break away sooner or later.<sup>1</sup>

Racial  
problems

Two problems, which faced our colonial administrators during the nineteenth century, complicated the history of the Second British Empire. One was the question of the relations between British-born settlers and other Europeans in our colonies; the other was the question of the relations between the Europeans and the coloured races. In Canada only the first of these problems existed; in New Zealand only the second; in South Africa, both existed in an acute form; in Australia neither existed, but instead there was the problem of the convicts and the free settlers. In Canada, the clashing interests of the French and British colonists were happily adjusted by 1840—or at least by 1867. In South Africa thousands of Boers fled from British rule, established two independent states, and finally challenged the British supremacy in the Second Boer War. In New Zealand there were Maori wars; in South Africa, Kaffir and Zulu wars. It is now time to trace the working out of these problems in the separate colonies.

## 2. *Canadian Federation*

Canada In the year of Queen Victoria's accession, there were two rebellions in Canada. Canada, it will be remembered,<sup>2</sup> had been divided by Pitt into two provinces, Upper and Lower Canada (Ontario and Quebec), the former containing a British-speaking majority, the latter a French. Both colonies had local Assemblies—Parliaments—but in both the executive government was in the hands of a Governor and Council, responsible to the British Government and not to the Canadian people or its Assemblies. In both Canadas the government was unpopular, but especially in Quebec, where rebellion first broke out. The rebels, both in Quebec and Ontario<sup>3</sup>, were easily crushed, and Melbourne sent out Lord Durham to investigate.

Rebellions  
of 1837

<sup>1</sup> For the revived interest in the Empire, first under Disraeli and then under Salisbury and Chamberlain, see Chapters XL and XLII.

<sup>2</sup> Above, p. 747.

<sup>3</sup> Papineau was the leader in Quebec, Mackenzie in Ontario.



Lord Durham's Report (1839) was a document of first-class importance in the history of the British Empire. His first proposal was to unite Upper and Lower Canada into one colony, in order to give the British and French a chance of working harmoniously together, instead of segregating them in their own areas. This was done by the Reunion Act (1840). The French Canadians disliked the union, but it was probably the best solution at this time. Quebec was again separated from Ontario twenty-seven years later.<sup>1</sup> The second proposal was more far-reaching; it was that the principle of self-government should be adopted in Canada. Durham recommended that the *executive* government, instead of being controlled from above, should be chosen from, and be responsible to, the local Assembly. In this way, the Canadian Parliament was to correspond to the British Parliament, and the Canadian Cabinet to the British Cabinet. Under the governorship of Lord Elgin (1847-54), Durham's son-in-law, this was carried into effect. Elgin did not interfere in the government of the country; he made his own position as Governor correspond with that of the Crown in Britain. At the same time the Canadian Cabinet, chosen by the Canadian Parliament, took over the executive duties of the former Council. The importance of this step cannot be exaggerated. It laid the foundation of our future self-governing Dominions, and solved the problem of how growing daughter-states were to remain on good terms with the parent nation.<sup>2</sup>

Durham's  
Report  
1839

Canadian  
Reunion  
Act, 1840

Elgin  
1847-54

Oregon  
Treaty  
1846

It was about this time that an important treaty was signed with the United States which vitally affected the future of Canada. The Americans, in warlike and expansive mood, were about to embark on the Mexican wars, by means of which they conquered Texas and California. They also wanted the whole Pacific coast; in other words they claimed British Columbia. The Americans were bellicose. A popular cry in the States was 'Fifty-four forty, or fight', which meant that they would fight to extend the northern boundary up to latitude 54° 40', i.e. to the borders of Alaska. Lord Aberdeen, Peel's Foreign

<sup>1</sup> British North America Act, 1867. See p. 852.

<sup>2</sup> Self-government was granted to Newfoundland in 1855, and also to the Maritime provinces of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick.

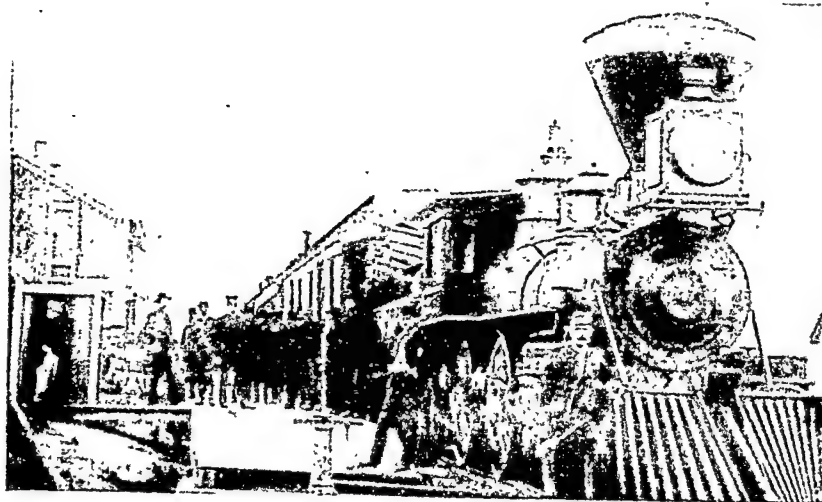
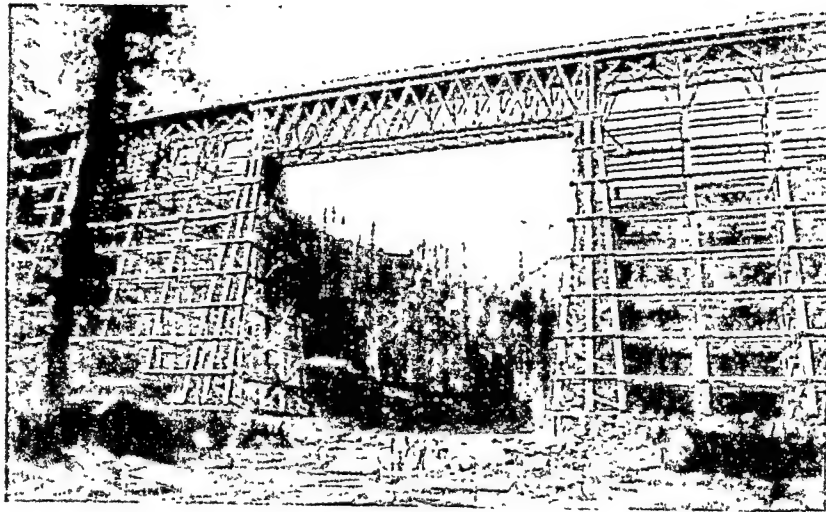
Secretary, however, arranged matters without recourse to fighting, and the Canadian-American boundary was continued across the Rockies to the Pacific, along latitude 49. British Columbia remained British, and the Americans were satisfied with their present State of Oregon, just south of Vancouver (1846).

The next important stage in the growth of Canada was the coming of Federation. As we have seen, there was a civil war in the United States over this very question, and the victory of the forces of the Union influenced the Canadians.

The Northern States were very angry with Britain at this time, over the *Trent* and the *Alabama* affairs.<sup>1</sup> Many urged that, when the South was conquered, the next step should be to conquer Canada. The inhabitants of British North America were unfavourable to incorporation in the United States of America, and they decided that union was strength. There were, in the 'sixties, the following separate British colonies in North America: the two Canadas, Quebec and Ontario, joined by the Act of 1840, but never, owing to the racial question, very happily joined; the three Maritime Provinces, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Prince Edward Isle; the island of Newfoundland; and the far-western colony of British Columbia. A conference at Quebec (1864) considered the question of the federation of the two Canadas and the three Maritime Provinces under one government—a British United States. The principle was agreed upon, and the Dominion of Canada was thus formed; it was legalized by the British North America Act of 1867. Four states—Quebec, Ontario (now separated once more), Nova Scotia, and New Brunswick—joined the Dominion in 1867; Prince Edward Island and British Columbia joined later; Newfoundland has never joined. Each of the provinces, like the American States, had its own local government; but more power was given to the central government at Ottawa than was enjoyed by that of Washington.

Two years after the passage of the Act, the Dominion acquired by purchase (1869) the lands of the Hudson's Bay Company. These lands, vast yet undefined in extent, extended eastwards to the borders of Quebec, and northwards and west-

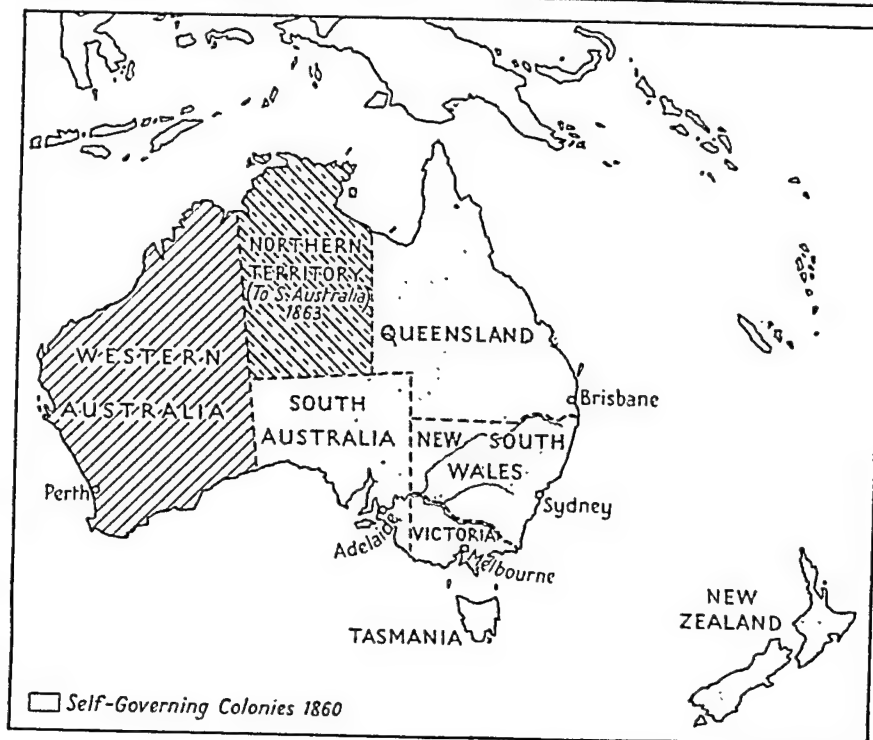
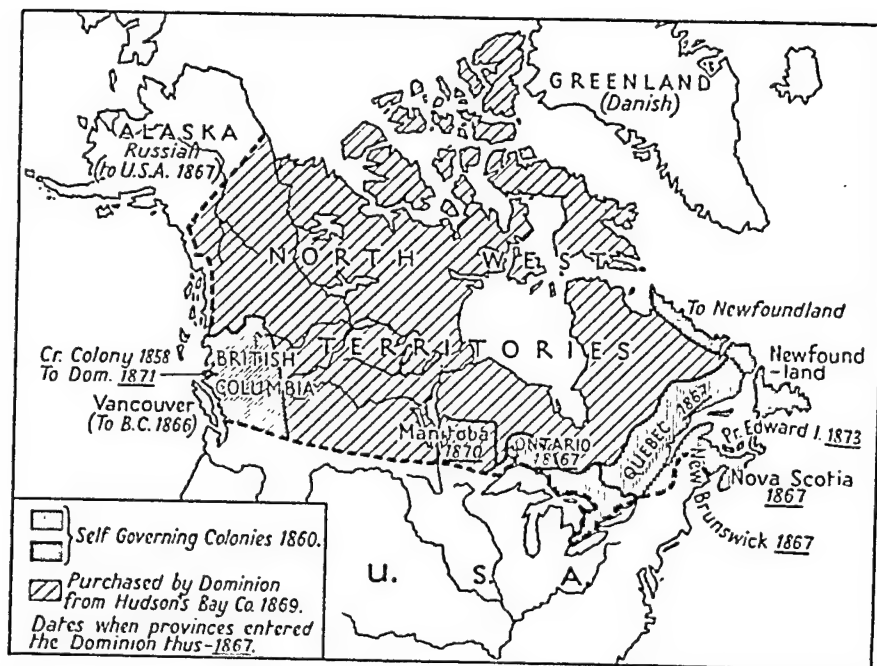
<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 843.



#### THE OPENING UP OF CANADA

*Above:* A trestle bridge in the Selkirks in the '80's. The illustration shows the difficulties with which the railway-builders had to contend.

*Below:* The first train into Calgary, August 1883. Calgary was then little more than a wooden railway station. Now it is a town of nearly 100,000 inhabitants.



THE GROWTH OF COLONIAL SELF-GOVERNMENT

wards into the yet undeveloped interior. The purchase was essential to the growth and unity of Canada. The next step was the building (1872-85) of the great trans-continental railway from the Atlantic to the Pacific—the Canadian Pacific Railway, completed in 1885.

The  
Canadian  
Pacific  
Railway

### 3. *Australia and New Zealand*

There were two colonies in Australia at the death of George III<sup>1</sup>—New South Wales and Tasmania; and both had been used for some years as convict settlements. That Australia would be developed by free settlers, that new colonies would be planted, that the old ones would be delivered from the stigma that attached to their early years—such were the hopes of a few enlightened men of those days. In the next twenty years these hopes were fulfilled.

It was largely due to Gibbon Wakefield that a new effort was made in the colonization of Australia. When the news reached England (1830) that Captain Sturt had discovered the mouth of the Murray in Encounter Bay, efforts were made to start a new colony in South Australia. In 1834 Wakefield and others founded a South Australian Company. Wakefield believed in 'assisted emigration'; that is, he proposed that poor but willing settlers should be given a financial start. Money raised from the sale of land in South Australia was used to assist needy colonists. The first settlement was made in 1836 and Adelaide founded in the following year. The early settlers got into debt, and no great progress was made until Major (afterwards Sir George) Grey<sup>2</sup> arrived as Governor in 1841.

South  
Australia  
1836

Meanwhile the two offshoots of New South Wales—Queensland and Victoria—had launched out on their separate careers, while Western Australia (1829) had been founded on the banks of the Swan River. Free emigration to these colonies was still very slow; but it was increasing and it was soon felt that the stigma which attached to New South Wales and Tasmania, as

Other  
colonies

<sup>1</sup> See above, Chapter XXXIV.

<sup>2</sup> Sir George Grey: Governor of South Australia 1841-5; Governor of New Zealand 1845-53; Governor of Cape Colony 1853-9; Governor of New Zealand 1861-7.

New South Wales transportation ended 1840 convict settlements, must be removed. So transportation New South Wales was abolished in 1840, and to Van Diemen's Land (renamed Tasmania) thirteen years later.<sup>1</sup>

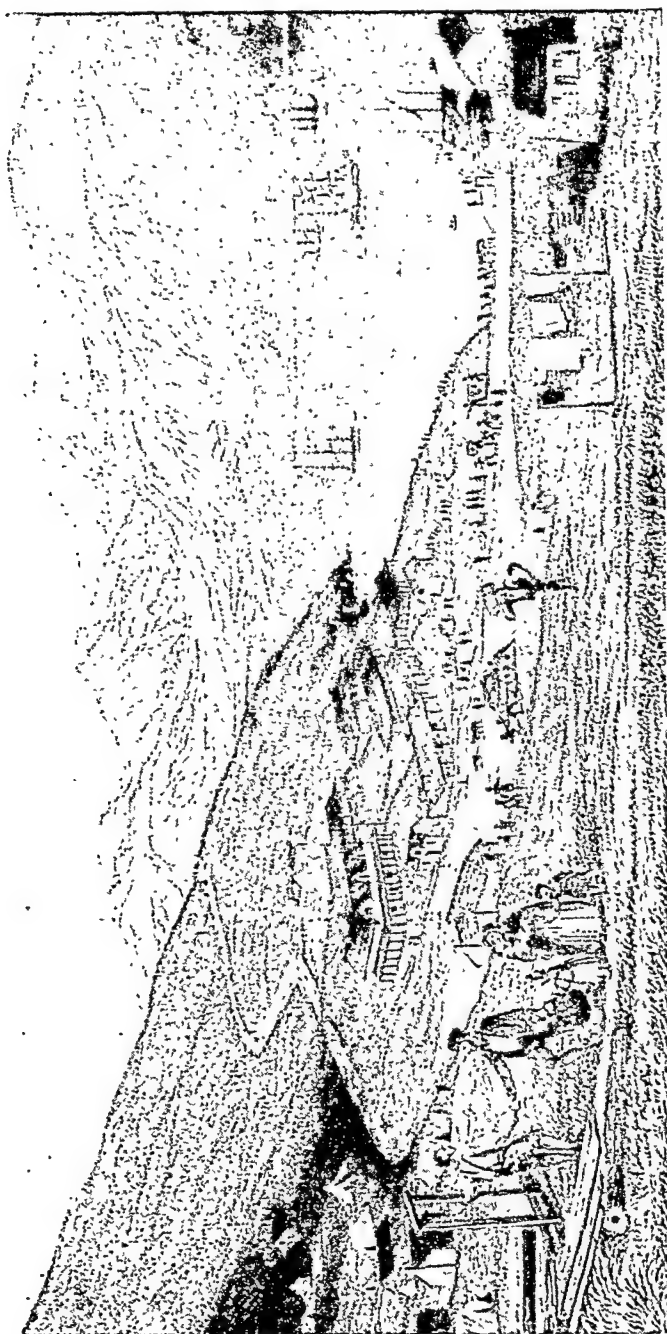
The opening up of Australia followed the discovery of a path through the Blue Mountains in 1813. Some of the finest grazing land in the world was found on the plains beyond the mountains. A few years later, explorers followed out the river system of New South Wales, until Sturt traced the Murray to its outlet in Encounter Bay (1829). Other intrepid explorers struck across the central deserts (e.g. Eyre 1839-41), but found that no rivers watered those sandy plains. The chief wealth of Australia lay in its gigantic sheep-farms, which have made it the greatest wool exporting country in the world. In 1851 gold was discovered at Bathurst in New South Wales and at Ballarat in Victoria. There was a gold rush from all parts of the world, the population of Victoria rose from 77,000 to 300,000 in five years.

In ten years (1840-50) Australia had changed from a land of a few scattered settlements, chiefly penal, to a new home of the British race, full of promise for the future. The foundation of the new colonies, the great success of sheep farming, the discovery of gold, all marked stages in a remarkable development. Local Parliaments were set up in all the colonies: in New South Wales in 1842, in Tasmania, Victoria, and South Australia eight years later. Then, in 1855, the principle which had just been accepted in Canada was applied to Australia; the chief colonies were all allowed to become self-governing.<sup>2</sup>

A few years after his success in South Australia, Gibbon Wakefield turned his attention to New Zealand, which had been visited by Dutch sailors and by Captain Cook, but never settled. The hardy and warlike Maoris, who inhabited the North Island, were a striking contrast to the feeble aborigines of the Australian continent. British missionaries, landing in New Zealand in 1814, had done something to civilize the

<sup>1</sup> Convicts were sent to West Australia till 1868.

<sup>2</sup> In 1855 self-government was given to New South Wales, Tasmania, Victoria, and South Australia, and four years later to Queensland. Western Australia, a more backward colony, did not have a legislative council till 1870, and became self-governing in 1890.



THE COLONIZATION OF NEW ZEALAND  
A drawing of 1851, showing Port Lyttelton, the landing-place for the Christchurch colony, with settlers landing and moving inland.

Maoris, but their good efforts were partly frustrated by the roving sailors, whalers, or pirates, who sold the natives drink and firearms. The missionaries complained to the sympathetic ears of Lord Glenelg, Colonial Secretary to the Melbourne Government. Glenelg considered that the natives should be left in peace, and frowned on all suggestions of a new English colony. But Gibbon Wakefield, fresh from his success in South Australia, was not to be stopped. He formed the New Zealand Company (1837), and then sent out his brother, Colonel Wakefield, with 1,000 colonists. Hearing that the French were about to send a similar expedition, the Colonial Office was forced to act. In 1839 it ordered the Government of New South Wales to take formal possession of the islands in the name of the queen. New Zealand was made a separate colony next year.

British  
annex New  
Zealand  
1839

Captain Hobson, from New South Wales, met the Maori chiefs at Waitangi (1840) and concluded a treaty with them, by which the Maoris were confirmed in possession of their lands, but gave to the British Government first right over any they might wish to sell. Hobson then founded the town of Auckland, while Colonel Wakefield founded Wellington in North Island, and Nelson in South Island. Sir George Grey became Governor of New Zealand in 1845, and remained there for eight years. His methods were entirely successful, and the Maoris learned to love and trust him, as he trusted them. It was due to him that war between the Maoris and the British colonists was then avoided.<sup>1</sup> Grey also bought out the native owners in South Island, which became a purely British preserve. There were only a few hundred Maoris in South Island; in North Island there were about 100,000. Here they gradually sold the coastal lands, and retired to the mountainous interior. The Maoris, though intelligent and energetic, steadily declined in numbers during the nineteenth century. Various illnesses, such as measles, were introduced by the British settlers. Though these are childish ailments in Britain, in New Zealand they swept away adult Maoris in hundreds.

Treaty of  
Waitangi  
1840

Sir George  
Grey and  
the  
Maoris

Just before Sir George Grey left New Zealand for the first

<sup>1</sup> There were, however, Maori wars during Grey's second term as Governor, twenty years later, beginning in 1861.



time, he put a new constitution into force, and opened a New Zealand Parliament on the lines of those already established in Canada and Australia (1852). Four years later New Zealand was granted the status of a fully self-governing colony.

#### 4. *British and Boers in South Africa*

Cape Colony, when the British took it over in 1815, contained about two million native inhabitants, and 25,000 Dutch colonists, known as Boers. The Boers employed native slaves on their farms, and their first grievance against their new rulers was the abolition of slavery throughout the British Empire (1833). They were promised compensation for the loss of their slaves, but in most cases they never got it. Another grievance was the treatment of the Kaffirs, warlike tribes to the east of Port Elizabeth,<sup>1</sup> whom the Boers considered should be crushed. The English Governor at the Cape, Sir Benjamin d'Urban, also took this view, and annexed some Kaffir territory (Kaffir War, 1834). But Glenelg, influenced by the London Missionary Society,<sup>2</sup> regarded the Kaffirs as very ill-used persons. He forced d'Urban to restore the lands he had taken, whereon the Governor resigned.

It was thus chiefly over the native problem that the British and Boers disagreed. In 1836 they began their Great Trek, which went on for twenty years. About 10,000 Boers, or more than a third of the total Dutch population, departed, and courageously sought a new home across the veld. Among the trekkers was a boy named Paul Kruger; sixty years later he led his countrymen into the Boer War against England. The Boers settled first between the Orange and Vaal rivers and founded the Orange Free State; then others crossed the Vaal and founded another colony, the Transvaal. A third party under Piet Retief settled in Natal, but were massacred by the Zulus under King Dingaan. This massacre was avenged at the Blood River (1838) by the Boers under Andries Pretorius (after whom Pretoria was later named), who also tried to settle in Natal. But the English annexed Natal in 1843, and a few years later Pretorius and his followers migrated to the O.F.S. and the Transvaal.

<sup>1</sup> Founded by English, not Dutch, in 1819.

<sup>2</sup> Founded 1795.

The separation of the Boers from British rule was at length recognized by the British Government, which concluded the Sand River Convention with the Transvaal Boers (1852), acknowledging their independence on the condition that there should be no slavery under their government. Two years later a similar treaty was made with the Orange Free State (Bloemfontein Convention, 1854). A majority of the more intelligent Boers in 1852-4 were not in favour of separation from British rule: but Britain did not want to be involved in possible wars to defend the Boers, and practically forced independence on them. This attitude was to cost Britain dear later: for, when British rule was re-established, it was not received in a friendly spirit. Britain's great opportunity in South Africa occurred in the 'fifties; and the opportunity was lost. The two Boer republics, together with the two British colonies, the Cape and Natal, now formed a nucleus of European settlement in South Africa, partly surrounded by native tribes, as yet unsubdued. Some of the natives, especially the Kaffirs and Zulus, were hostile and warlike. Sir George Grey, who became Governor of Cape Colony in 1853, was almost as successful with the Kaffirs as he had formerly been with the Maoris; the Kaffir lands were gradually put under British protection. Grey also suggested a federation of South Africa, by which the British and Boer colonies should be peaceably joined together, like the British and French in Canada. But this scheme was not supported by the British Government, and it fell through. South Africa had to wait more than fifty years—till 1910—for its fulfilment.

### 5. *India (to 1858)*

The far-reaching changes in the British colonies, which we have been considering, had their counterpart in India. In the early years of the century, a policy of frank conquest was pushed forward, beginning with the subjection of southern India by Wellesley.<sup>1</sup> The Marquis of Hastings (1813-23) completed Wellesley's work by his final subjection of the Mahrattas, while the First Burmese War (1824-6), resulting in the conquest

<sup>1</sup> See above, Chapter XXXIV.

of Assam and part of the Burmese coast,<sup>1</sup> pushed the bounds of British influence beyond the limits of India proper. Then came the important rule (1828-35) of Lord William Bentinck as Governor-General. Bentinck began by sternly suppressing some of the more odious Indian customs, e.g. the practice of *suttee*, or the burning alive of widows on their husbands' funeral pyres. He was also a firm believer in the possibilities of educating Indians in Western ideas. The renewed Charter of the East India Company (1834) embodied Bentinck's ideas in the words: 'No native of India, or any natural-born subject of His Majesty, shall be disabled from holding any place, office or employment, by reason of his religion, place of birth, descent or colour.' A member of Bentinck's Council was the historian Macaulay, who persuaded the Governor-General to introduce far-reaching educational reforms. The decision, taken in 1835, that English should be the language used in state-aided schools throughout India was of immense consequence; it has made English what Latin was in medieval Europe, the common tongue of almost half a continent. Western studies—science, history, and literature—accompanied the teaching of English, with results which have coloured the whole subsequent history of India.<sup>2</sup>

Lord  
William  
Bentinck  
1828-35

Educa-  
tional  
reforms

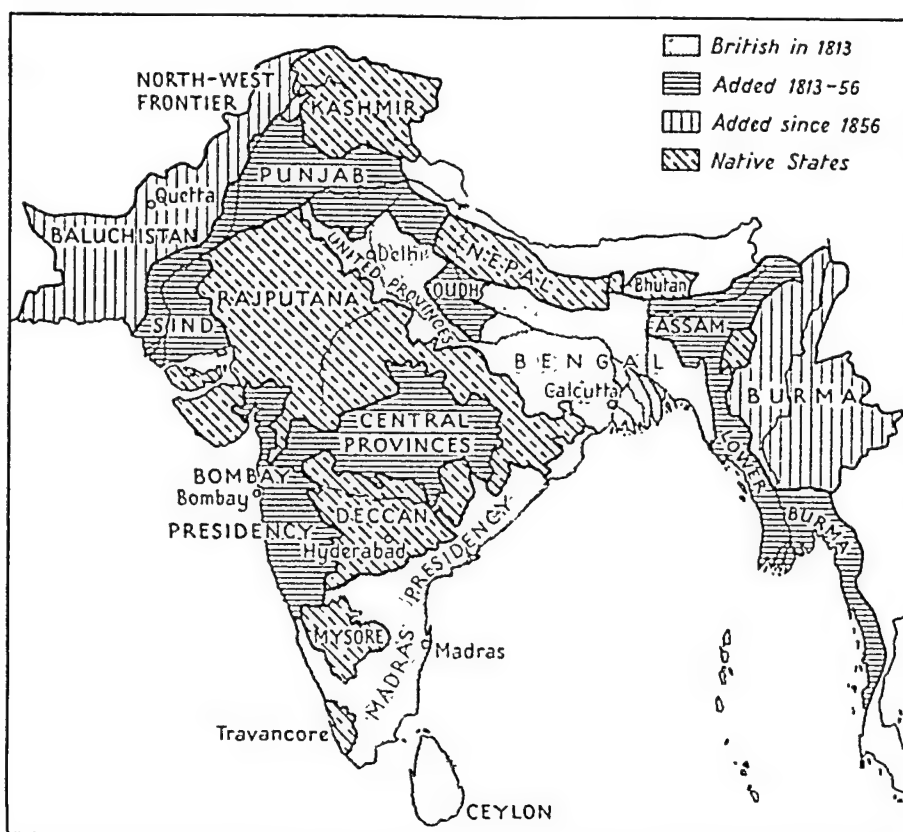
The sea and the Himalaya form natural boundaries on three sides of India; the fourth side is the North-West Frontier, whose limits have not been fixed so obviously by nature. In 1830, British India stopped short of the valley of the Indus, which was divided between two independent states, the Punjab and Sind (see map, p. 862). Beyond the Indus, the mountains rose higher and higher till they led into the wild Afghan country, whence the conquerors of India had come in olden times. For the British, it would perhaps have been wiser to begin with the conquest of the Indus valley; but Lord Auckland (Governor-General, 1836-41) decided to attack the people of the hills.

The North-  
West  
Frontier

<sup>1</sup> The Second Burmese War, 1852, led to the annexation of the lower valley of the Irrawaddy; the Third War, 1886, to the capture of the capital Mandalay, and the annexation of Upper Burma, i.e. the remainder of this vast kingdom.

<sup>2</sup> See below, Chapter XLIV. The education decision of 1835 led by successive stages to the demand for self-government, a large measure of which was granted exactly a century later by the India Act of 1935.

This thrust towards Afghanistan was partly directed by the ever-present fear of Russia; if Britain could control Afghanistan, she might stop the dreaded Russian advance on India.



THE GROWTH OF BRITISH INDIA

First  
Afghan  
War  
1839-42

So Auckland dethroned Dost Mohammed, the ruling Amir of Afghanistan, and set up Shah Shuja in his stead. But Shah Shuja could be kept on the throne only by British bayonets and, after two years of this, the tribes rose on behalf of their deposed amir. The British then agreed to evacuate the country, and were promised a safe retreat. The promise was not kept; they died of starvation or exposure, or were cut down by the Afghans. Sixteen thousand persons (4,000 soldiers, 12,000 civilians) perished in the retreat; a single white survivor escaped to Jalalabad to tell the tale of disaster. So ended the first British attempt to control Afghanistan.

The next seven years saw the conquest of the whole Indus valley. Sind was attacked first, and forced by Sir Charles Napier to give up its independence. Napier had some doubts about the justice of his actions—he himself said it was a ‘very advantageous, useful, humane piece of rascality’, and *Punch* suggested that his success should have been announced in the one word—*Peccavi* (‘I have sinned’). But the loss to British prestige from the Afghan disaster soon provoked the warlike Sikhs of the Punjab—the country of Five Rivers—to attack British India. In 1845 they crossed the Sutlej; the British under Sir Hugh Gough suffered heavily, but checked the invasion. Next year Gough won the battle of Sobraon and entered Lahore. The Punjab was declared a protected state, and so remained for another three years, when a second war—a last struggle for independence—broke out. Gough was defeated at Chilianwallah, but finally broke the Sikh army at Gujerat (1849); Lord Dalhousie, the new Governor-General, declared the annexation of the Punjab. The brothers Lawrence—Sir Henry and Sir John—who were sent to govern the conquered state, managed, by their skilful handling of the problem, to turn the Sikhs from dangerous enemies into loyal subjects.

Sind  
1843The Sikh  
wars  
1845-9The  
Lawrences

Under Lord Dalhousie considerable additions were made to British India. Dalhousie firmly believed that Indians were better off under British rule than under that of their own princes; he lost no opportunity of annexing native lands. He would not allow Indian princes to adopt heirs, as had been the practice, should they have no direct descendants; in such cases he declared that their lands had ‘lapsed’ to the Company. In this way he annexed several states in Central India. Oudh, on the Ganges, he annexed outright, dethroning the nawab, whose government was a byword for incompetence and cruelty. In other ways, Dalhousie believed in a ‘forward’ policy. It was in his time that railways and telegraphs and similar Western inventions were introduced into India on a large scale. All this gave offence to the more conservative native minds. Discontent against Dalhousie’s policy was general in northern India when he left in 1856. And in that year the order that all sepoys must be prepared to serve abroad, if necessary, inflamed the discontent in the Indian Army. At the same time the trouble

Lord  
Dalhousie  
1849-56

over the greased cartridges for the new Enfield rifle aroused religious passions, and for once united Mohammedan and Hindu.<sup>1</sup>

The  
Mutiny  
1857

The next year the Mutiny broke out at Meerut (10 May). The sepoys there murdered their officers and marched on Delhi, the ancient capital of India, and seized the town. Probably the fact that the natives in the Indian Army outnumbered the British by 5 to 1 was a deciding factor—that, and the memory of the Afghan and Crimean Wars, which had proved that British soldiers, though brave, were not invincible.

Capture  
of Delhi,  
(September)

At Delhi the descendant of the old Mogul Emperors was brought forth and hailed by the mutineers, who made his 'capital' the centre of the revolt. The Mutiny spread farther down the Ganges valley and throughout Oudh. At Cawnpore, the miscreant Nana Sahib captured all the British and then treacherously murdered them.<sup>2</sup> At Lucknow, the capital of Oudh, Sir Henry Lawrence (late of the Punjab) held the Residency against thousands of besiegers. Delhi was attacked by a small British force from the Ridge outside the town. When this force had been increased by a relief sent by Sir John Lawrence from the Punjab, the British attacked the city. They blew up the Kashmir Gate, and took the town street by street in six days' fighting (September). Meanwhile Sir Henry Lawrence had been killed by a shell at Lucknow, and the Residency garrison reinforced by Sir Henry Havelock, whose men had to fight their way in. The arrival of Sir Colin Campbell with a second relieving force put an end to the siege (November 1857).

Relief of  
Lucknow  
(November)

The capture of Delhi and the relief of Lucknow was the turning-point; in the following year the Mutiny was put down. It had, indeed, never spread seriously from the army to the civilian population; and it was throughout almost

<sup>1</sup> The offending grease used on the cartridges was either pig or cow fat. The Mohammedans abhorred the pig; the Hindus revered the cow. The touching of the grease would therefore be degradation to a Mohammedan, sacrilege to a Hindu.

<sup>2</sup> Nana Sahib persuaded the British at Cawnpore to lay down their arms on promise of a safe departure. But as they were embarking to go down the river he killed all the men, and seized the women and children. Later, fearing a rescue, he murdered the women and children too, and cast their bodies down a well.

entirely confined to what are now the Central Provinces. In particular the Sikhs, Ghurkas, and most of the Indian princes<sup>1</sup> remained loyal: and this enabled the Mutiny to be broken before the arrival of reinforcements from Britain. It left bitter memories, among the British on account of such devilries as those of Nana Sahib at the Well of Cawnpore, among the Indians on account of the inevitable reaction. In spite of the restraining efforts of 'Clemency Canning', the new Governor-General, the Mutiny was stamped out with a good deal of harshness and unnecessary cruelty. At the same time, the rule of the old East India Company was brought to an end, and a closer connexion established between the people of India and the British Crown. The Queen's Proclamation (November 1858) struck a conciliatory note, designed especially to soothe the religious fears of the Indians.

End of the  
East India  
Company  
The  
Queen's  
Proclama-  
tion, 1858

'It is our royal will and pleasure that no one shall in any wise suffer for his opinions, or be disquieted by reason of his religious faith or observance. We shall show to all alike the equal and impartial protection of the law, and we do strictly charge and enjoin those who may be in authority under us that they abstain from all interference with the religious belief or worship of any of our subjects on pain of our highest displeasure. It is our further will that, so far as may be, our subjects, of whatever class or creed, be fully and freely admitted to any offices the duties of which they may be qualified by their education, abilities and integrity duly to discharge.'

The ending of the Mutiny, and the Proclamation of 1858 marked the end, not only of the East India Company, but of the 'forward' policy with regard to annexations in India. No further acquisition of lands in the interior of India has taken place since that date; the ruling princes have been left in undisturbed possession.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Only two Hindu princes rebelled, Nana Sahib and the Ranee of Jhansi—an Indian lady who showed remarkable character and courage.

<sup>2</sup> Certain additions have been made on the frontier, with a view to strengthening India against possible attack from without—e.g. in Burma and Baluchistan and on the North-West Frontier.

## DATE SUMMARY: THE REFORM ERA (1830-52)

## HOME AFFAIRS

## FOREIGN AND IMPERIAL

## THE WHIG REFORMERS (1830-41)

- |                                     |                           |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1830-4 Grey Ministry                | 1828-35 Bentinck in India |
| 1830 Agricultural Labourers' Revolt |                           |
| 1832 REFORM ACT                     |                           |
| 1833 Oxford Movement begins         | 1833 SLAVERY ABOLISHED in |
| Factory Act                         | British Empire            |
| 1834 Grand National Trades Union    |                           |
| 1834 POOR LAW                       |                           |
| 1834-5 Peel Ministry                | 1836 Great Trek begins    |
| 1835-41 Melbourne Ministry          | S. Australia founded      |
| 1835 Municipal Corporations Act     | 1837 Canadian Rebellions  |
| 1836 <i>Pickwick Papers</i>         |                           |
| 1837 VICTORIA acc.                  | 1839-42 First Afghan War  |
| 1838 Great Western Railway          | 1839 Belgian Treaty       |
| 1838-46 Anti-Corn-Law League        | British in New Zealand    |
| 1838-9 Chartist Agitation           | DURHAM REPORT             |
|                                     | 1840 Canada Act           |
| 1840 PENNY POSTAGE                  | Treaty of Waitangi (N.Z.) |
| Marriage of Victoria                | 1840-2 First China War    |

## PEEL (1841-6)

- |                          |                             |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1842 Mines Act           | 1842 Afghan Disaster        |
| Income Tax 7d.           |                             |
|                          | 1843 British annex Natal    |
| 1844 Bank Charter Act    | " " Sind                    |
| 1845-7 Railway Mania     |                             |
| 1845 Irish Famine        |                             |
| 1846 REPEAL OF CORN LAWS | 1846 Oregon Treaty (U.S.A.) |

## LORD JOHN RUSSELL (1846-52)

- |                                   |  |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| 1847 Ten Hours' Act               | 1847-54 Elgin in Canada (Self-govern-<br>ment)                     |
| 1848 Chadwick's Public Health Act | 1848 YEAR OF REVOLUTIONS in France,<br>Germany, Austria, and Italy |
| End of Chartist                   | 1849 Garibaldi in Rome   |
|                                   | 1849-56 Dalhousie in India   |
| 1851 Dover-Calais cable           | 1850 Don Pacifico  |
| Great Exhibition                  | 1851 Gold in N.S.W. and Victoria                                   |
| 1852 First Derby Ministry         | Louis Napoleon's <i>Coup d'état</i>                                |
| Wellington d.                     | 1852 Sand River Convention (Boers)                                 |



## XL

### GLADSTONE AND DISRAELI

#### 1. *The Second Reform Bill*

ON Lord Palmerston's death (1865) Earl Russell became Prime Minister for the second time. Thirty-five years before, as Lord John Russell, he had introduced the First Reform Bill into the House of Commons; now, an aged and respected statesman, he was contemplating further reforms.<sup>1</sup> There was a small but growing demand, among the artisan class in the towns, for an extension of the franchise; and Whig statesmen, now that Lord Palmerston was dead, were in favour of this reform. Meanwhile the reform movement had found a spokesman in John Bright, a Quaker and a Radical, who had been Cobden's lieutenant in the Anti-Corn-Law League days. Bright was a thorough democrat, much disliked by the ruling class, but immensely popular with the masses. In a speech at Birmingham (1865) he quoted the old Puritan poet who said:

There is on earth a yet auguster thing,  
Veiled though it be, than Parliament or King.

'That auguster thing', continued Bright, 'is the tribunal which God has set up in the conscience of men. It is before that tribunal that I am now permitted humbly to plead, and there is something in my heart—a small but an exultant voice—which tells me I shall not plead in vain.'

In 1866 a Reform Bill was introduced by Gladstone into the House of Commons. Its terms were moderate, but it was opposed not only by the Conservatives, but by a rebel section of the Whigs, led by Robert Lowe. Lowe rallied to his side all the discontented Whigs, as the outlaws rallied to King David in the Cave of Adullam—so said Bright, nicknaming Lowe's followers the Adullamites. Lowe was a man who did not measure his words; he said plainly, in words that made him

Russell's  
Ministry  
1865-6

John Bright

Reform  
Bill, 1866

Lowe and  
the Adulla-  
mites

<sup>1</sup> He had long given up the idea that the 1832 Act was final, and had introduced other Bills, e.g. in 1852 and 1854.

the best-hated man in England, that he did not trust the working classes. Lowe attacked the enfranchisement of the working labourer no less vehemently than Bright advocated it. The debates of 1866 were among the keenest ever known in the Commons.

'Then began' (says Bright's biographer) 'a battle of giants. The leading combatants never left the House, and everyone knew where to look for them. Nothing but the gangway separated Bright and Lowe, the two champions who represented the forces of democracy and aristocracy, now come to grips. . . . On the other side of the House sat Lord Robert Cecil,<sup>1</sup> the soul of the resistance on the Conservative side to working-class enfranchisement, with across the table Gladstone and Disraeli eyed each other, the greatest pair of Parliamentary rivals since Fox and Pitt. If the time was great in its issues, the men who had to deal with it were themselves of no puny stature.'<sup>2</sup>

But the rebellion of the Adullamites wrecked the Bill; it was thrown out, and the Government resigned (June 1866).

Derby's  
Third  
Ministry  
1866-8

Lord Derby now became Prime Minister for the third time. It was his Government which passed the Act creating the Dominion of Canada (1867). At the same time the agitation for Reform swept the country. John Bright conducted a lightning campaign, and his enthusiastic reception in the great cities showed how keen was becoming the demand for the franchise. It was this campaign, more than anything else, that convinced Derby and Disraeli that they could resist the demand no longer. So a Reform Bill was introduced by the Conservative ministers, in circumstances recalling the conversion of Sir Robert Peel to the Corn Law Repeal (1846). But there was now no young Disraeli to head a revolt against the Conservative leaders, as there had been in that famous scene twenty-one years earlier. The future Lord Salisbury spoke against the Bill, and spoke strongly, but he did not lead a revolt. Gladstone, in a series of amendments, succeeded in abolishing all the 'safeguards' which the Government had put into the Bill. In its final form<sup>3</sup> the Bill was far more radical than the Liberal Bill

The Reform  
Bill of  
1867

<sup>1</sup> Afterwards Marquis of Salisbury. See below, p. 915.

<sup>2</sup> Trevelyan, *Life of Bright*.

<sup>3</sup> During the debates on the Bill, John Stuart Mill put forward a

of the previous year. It enfranchised all male householders in towns, and also lodgers paying £10 a year rent; in the counties, householders paying a rent of £12 a year were given the vote.

This Reform Bill of 1867,<sup>1</sup> by giving the vote to the artisans and other small householders, for the first time put the English franchise on a really democratic basis. This momentous step called forth a number of comments, which have gone down to history. Lord Derby, in his cynical way, remarked that his party had 'dished the Whigs', but described the Bill as a 'leap in the dark'. Carlyle, who disliked the extended franchise, called it 'Shooting Niagara'. The future Lord Salisbury called it 'a political betrayal which has no parallel in our annals'; and Robert Lowe's comment was: 'We must now at least educate our new masters.' Disraeli boasted that, by winning acceptance for Reform he had 'educated his Party', and he proclaimed his faith in the future in the following noble words: 'I think England is safe in the hands of the men who inherit her; that she is safe is something more than her accumulated capital, her accumulated experience. She is safe in her national character, in her fame, in the tradition of a thousand years, and in that glorious future which I believe awaits her.'

When Lord Derby retired (1868) Disraeli became Prime Minister, but held office only for a few months. Since Lord Russell retired from active politics about the same time as Derby, the way was left open for Gladstone, who succeeded Disraeli as Premier. These two men, Gladstone and Disraeli, held the centre of the English stage until Disraeli's death, thirteen years later. The debates in the House, in which the great rivals played leading parts, were fully reported in the newspapers, and followed with the keenest interest by a public which then had neither film stars nor football champions to interest them. All witnesses are agreed that this age was, with the possible exception of the Pitt-Fox era, the greatest in our parliamentary annals. Gladstone was a human tornado, whose boundless energy expressed itself in the long speeches, intricate in phrase, but packed with information, with which

proposal to give the vote to women. The suggestion was treated by the House as a joke.

<sup>1</sup> For further details, see Notes on Parliamentary Reform, p. 805.

'A Leap  
in the  
Dark'

The  
Gladstone-  
Disraeli  
Duel

he astonished the House of Commons.<sup>1</sup> Disraeli's gifts were of a different kind; he seldom showed excitement, but preserved a sphinx-like calm which puzzled opponents, anxious to know what was going on behind that impassive countenance.

Few men could have been more unlike each other than these two rivals, in character, temperament, or upbringing. Gladstone, the son of a Liverpool merchant, was educated at Eton and Oxford, where he took a Double First. In early life he was prominent both as a High Churchman (which he always remained) and as a Tory. But Gladstone's political career was one of constant change—a progress from the Right to the Left. He followed Peel in 1846, and became the principal advocate of Free Trade under the governments of Palmerston and Russell. When those statesmen passed from the scene, Gladstone assumed the leadership of their party, which he transformed into the Liberal Party, one of the greatest forces in English life for fifty years. Moral earnestness was the keynote of Gladstone's character; he was a true son of the Victorian age. To his opponents, Gladstone's righteousness was mere hypocrisy; to his followers it was the mark of a true prophet. Few men in English public life have been worshipped as Gladstone was worshipped, or loathed as he was loathed.

Benjamin Disraeli, who was of Jewish origin, was not the product of an English public school and university; but he raised himself by sheer native ability and determination to the first place in Britain. Scarcely less amazing than his ascendancy in the House where he had once been hooted down was his success with the queen. Victoria fell an easy prey to the elderly but still fascinating Jew; his oriental magnificence entirely captivated her, while she regarded Gladstone, whose manner, though deferential, was ponderous, with growing dislike. Disraeli's career had been as little consistent as Gladstone's own<sup>2</sup>—he first gained fame as a writer of novels and as a

<sup>1</sup> Gladstone's sentences were often a maze of parentheses. John Bright, comparing his own straightforward yet equally powerful style of oratory with Gladstone's, said: 'When I speak, I strike across from headland to headland. Mr. Gladstone follows the coast-line; and when he comes to a navigable river he is unable to resist the temptation of tracing it to its source.'

<sup>2</sup> Or, indeed, as that of most English statesmen of the last hundred

Radical. But it was as a Conservative that he led the revolt against Peel in 1846, and thereafter mounted the ladder of success. Disraeli was a member of the House of Commons for thirty-nine years (1837-76), and he knew as well as his rival how to dominate that assembly. His wit was his greatest asset; and his biting phrases formed a curious contrast to Mr. Gladstone's burning eloquence. As Prime Minister, Disraeli did not forget his early Radicalism. As we shall see, he educated his party to accept his belief in social reform.

## 2. Gladstone's First Ministry

### (i) *An Era of Reform.*

The small householders whom Derby and Disraeli had enfranchised failed to show their gratitude to the Conservatives; at the next General Election a substantial Liberal majority was returned. Gladstone, who thus became Prime Minister for the first time at the age of fifty-nine, stood yet—such was the amazing vitality of the man—on the threshold of his long career of power. Four times Prime Minister of England, he met with varied success; his first ministry was by far the most fruitful in achievement. It contained some able men. Robert Lowe, the anti-Liberal Whig, was, rather curiously, made Chancellor of the Exchequer; his arch-rival, John Bright the Radical, was brought into the Cabinet as President of the Board of Trade. Lord Clarendon was Foreign Secretary till his death (1870), and then Lord Granville. The ablest man in the Cabinet, next to the Premier, was Edward Cardwell, Secretary for War.

Gladstone's  
First  
Ministry  
1868-74

Gladstone's Cabinet was a fusion of Peelites (like Cardwell and the Premier himself), Whigs (like Lowe), and Radicals (like John Bright); but out of it Gladstone formed a cohesive government, and with it he created a great party—the Liberal Party. Modern Liberalism, thus brought into being, proved to be one of the main factors in British life up to, at least, the beginning years. Melbourne, Palmerston, Derby, Gladstone, Disraeli, Joseph Chamberlain, Haldane, MacDonald, Snowden—all these men began in one party and ended in another. It is a long list, and it could easily be added to. On the consistent side we have Lord John Russell, Lord Salisbury, Balfour, Asquith, Lloyd George, Baldwin.

Liberalism

of the Great War. The Liberals stood, first and foremost, for the reform of outworn institutions, and for the abolition of class privilege. Such was Gladstone's faith; the more Whiggish of his supporters followed unwillingly behind him. His foreign and colonial policy was unenterprising, for he believed that vigorous intervention abroad was productive of war, and not worth while; and it was on this side that he eventually failed to carry public opinion with him. But, at first, Reform was in the air, and Liberalism entered on its triumphant career.

Ireland Gladstone first turned his attention to Ireland, where the violence of the Fenian movement had made him determined to carry out sweeping changes. Religious, economic, and political questions all bristled with difficulties, and had been all treated in a violent spirit, reminiscent of Tudor England. Gladstone tackled the religious problem first. He brought in a Bill (1869)—on which he spoke with his customary skill for three hours—to disestablish the Anglican Church of Ireland. This was a measure of obvious justice, for the majority of Irishmen were Catholics, who resented paying tithes to an alien Church. Henceforth the Irish Episcopal Church was put on a different footing, and its connexion with the State dissolved. It was allowed to retain rather more than half its endowments; the rest were used for secular purposes.

Irish  
Church  
Act, 1869

The economic question was more difficult. The population of Ireland was steadily declining—eight millions in 1841, only five millions in 1871—and farming, the mainstay of the country, was ceasing to be profitable. Landlords often evicted their tenants in order to try to make a living by cattle-grazing. But evictions caused only more poverty, and more emigrations to America. Lawlessness became common; the murder of unpopular landlords was a regular feature of Irish life. A revolutionary society, the Fenians, had been formed in 1859 to try to find in an Irish Republic a solution to all these difficulties. Gladstone, in dealing with Irish ills, did his best to redress one great grievance. Irish landlords not only evicted their tenants; they evicted them without compensation, and this in spite of the fact that the tenant, not the landlord, had to undertake all repairs and improvements. Gladstone's

Land Act (1870) made the landlord pay compensation to the outgoing tenant. Such were Gladstone's first hopeful measures dealing with the problem of Ireland. Irish Land Act, 1870

In the same year the Liberals under Gladstone brought in the greatest of all the reform measures, and the piece of legislation that did more than anything else to change the future of England—the Education Act of 1870. Before 1870, there was no national system of education in England, and a majority of the working class was totally illiterate. There were, of course, the public schools for the well-to-do, the old grammar schools—often small and neglected—and a number of private schools, some of them very badly run, like Dickens's Dotheboys Hall, over which the immortal Mr. Squeers presided. For the poorest class, there were the Church schools, maintained by the Church of England, and controlled by the local vicar. The Nonconformist bodies also maintained their own schools. Education Act, 1870

As early as 1833 it had been recognized that any schools maintained by the charity of the Church or other body deserved some help from the State, and a small sum (at first only £20,000 per annum) was set aside for this purpose. Again, in 1839, a Committee of the Privy Council—the nucleus of the present Board of Education—was set up to supervise state-aided education, so far as it yet existed, and Inspectors were appointed to visit state-aided schools. It was this rudimentary system which the Vice-President of the Privy Council, a Quaker named W. E. Forster,<sup>1</sup> sought to improve by his famous Education Act. Forster could not help stirring up religious controversy, for the Church of England was jealous of any non-religious body interfering with education, and Nonconformists were jealous of the Church of England. In particular, the Birmingham Education League, led by Joseph Chamberlain, demanded universal education, freed from any suspicion of religious bias. Forster's Act made education avail-

<sup>1</sup> William Edward Forster. Born 1818. Brought up as a Quaker; went into Bradford woollen trade; married a daughter of Dr. Arnold; M.P. for Bradford; Under-Secretary for Colonies (1865); Vice-President of the Privy Council (1868-74) and responsible for Education Act; Chief Secretary for Ireland (1880-2). Resigned when Gladstone came to terms with Parnell, the Irish leader. Died 1886.

able for every child in the land. It divided England into districts, controlled by School Boards, which were empowered to levy education rates and to set up elementary schools wherever no school already existed. The existing Church schools, with their grants increased, much to the chagrin of the Nonconformists, were continued side by side with the new Board schools. The new schools offended the Church; the continuance of the old schools offended non-Churchmen. But, in spite of all criticism, the Government had done a great work for England; they had ordained that, for the first time, a school should be placed within the reach of every English child. But schooling was not yet compulsory or free. However, ten years later, Gladstone's Government made attendance at elementary schools compulsory (1880). As a rule the parents had for another eleven years to pay fees, until the Conservatives (in 1891) made schooling free in all public elementary schools.

Gladstone did two other good things for education. In 1870 he threw open all posts in the Civil Service (except in the Foreign Office) to competitive examination, thus stimulating the teaching at the universities. Next year (1871) he removed a crying evil by his Tests Act, which abolished the religious tests which had hitherto kept Nonconformists and Roman Catholics out of Oxford and Cambridge. London University (founded 1836) had never been similarly burdened, nor were the newer universities, of which the next to be founded was Victoria University (1880).<sup>1</sup> It was about this time, we may note here, that several important steps were taken towards the education of women. Miss Buss, Headmistress of the North London Collegiate School, handed over her property to a company (1870) which developed into the Girls' Public Day School Trust. Miss Beale, Headmistress of Cheltenham Ladies' College, was now laying the foundations of public-school education for girls. Emily Davies founded Girton College (1869) at Hitchin (later moved to Cambridge), Newnham was founded (1871) at Cambridge, and Lady Margaret

University  
Education

Education  
of women

<sup>1</sup> Earlier colleges, e.g. Owens College, Manchester, had been founded, but were not granted the status of universities. Victoria University was a federal body, including on an equal footing colleges at Liverpool, Manchester, and Leeds.



Hall (1878) and Somerville (1879) soon followed at Oxford. The women students were not as yet, however, admitted as members of either university. They were permitted to sit for the degree examination but not to take the degree.

(ii) *The Franco-Prussian War.*

Against this busy English scene the war-clouds over Europe formed an unhappy contrast. When, on 2 August 1870, the guns thundered out to begin the war between France and Prussia, perhaps no Englishman then living realized the significance of that event. Yet, forty-four years later, almost to the day, Britain was to come into conflict with the powerful new Germany that emerged from the struggle of 1870-1.

The immediate causes of the Franco-Prussian War need not concern us here. Bismarck had already, by the Austro-Prussian War,<sup>1</sup> made Prussia supreme in Germany; he now seized the opportunity, largely created by the folly of the French Government, to strike down Imperial France, and plant Imperial Germany in her place as the first nation in Europe. In July 1870 the French newspapers were flaming with the news that the King of Prussia had insulted the French Ambassador.<sup>2</sup> The Prussians were confident and prepared; the French were over-confident and unprepared. The war began. In a few weeks of surprising drama, while all Europe held its breath, the Prussian army, the most efficient engine of warfare in the world, struck down the French resistance in a series of hammer-blows. During that August the Germans penetrated over one hundred miles into France; on the 2nd of September Napoleon III surrendered at Sedan, and France lost an army of 100,000 men. While the Third Republic was set up in Paris, the remaining French armies put up a gallant but losing fight.

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 845.

<sup>2</sup> The quarrel concerned a German candidate for the throne of Spain. The King of Prussia, William I, at the request of France withdrew his support of this candidate. The French foolishly pressed the matter further and demanded that the king should, in no circumstances, renew his support. When King William very naturally refused this request, Bismarck allowed his refusal to appear in a form which the French thought an insult to their ambassador. This brought on the war which both Bismarck and the French Imperial Court desired.

In October Marshal Bazaine surrendered with 170,000 men at Metz—the largest military capitulation so far recorded in the history of the world. That autumn and winter Paris, the second largest city in the world, and the world's capital in fashion, luxury, and splendour, was subjected to a 131 days' siege, prolonged through misery and starvation, and ending in capitulation.

The lessons of the war The humiliation of France was complete and profound. The German Empire was proclaimed, with a clash of swords, in Versailles, the palace of the French kings. Afterwards, at Frankfort, the French emissaries had to sign away Alsace and Lorraine to Germany, and promise to pay an indemnity of 5,000 million francs. A German army of occupation remained in France until the money was paid. There were many lessons to be learnt from this war. Among them, all men noted the deadly efficiency of the German military machine—the conscript army, the professional training, the use made of modern inventions like railways for war purposes, the new and more accurate guns. All these things held a dreadful lesson for the future. Meanwhile, with France humbled in the dust, Germany was triumphant. The new German Empire (1871–1918), with the King of Prussia as emperor and Bismarck as chancellor, had conquered by the sword. It was now Bismarck's task to consolidate his gains.

Britain and the war English opinion during the Franco-Prussian War began by being in favour of Prussia, but veered round to the weaker side as the war proceeded—especially during the siege of Paris. London alone sent £80,000 worth of provisions to the starving citizens when Paris surrendered (January 1871). On the diplomatic side, Gladstone, at the outset of the war, obtained from both belligerents a promise to respect the neutrality of Belgium.<sup>1</sup> But he could do nothing when the Russians, backed by Bismarck, now tore up part of the Treaty of Paris (1856) by repudiating the clause which declared the Black Sea neutral. Another result of the war was the occupation of Rome by the

<sup>1</sup> For the Belgian Treaty (1839) see above, p. 826, and for the same question, as it confronted the Asquith Cabinet in 1914, see below, p. 952. The danger to Belgium in 1870 was from France rather than from Germany.



THE BRITISH ARMY IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

Royal Artillery in action, 1840.

*(Photograph by the Parker Gallery, London.)*

troops of the King of Italy (1870). This action, which completed the union of Italy, was, however, no concern of Britain.

The  
British  
Army

But the comparative weakness of Britain among the armed nations of the Continent was too glaring to be disregarded. Britain never had been, and, we may safely say, never will be a military-minded nation; there was no question of our imitating Prussian methods. Still, some increase in our defences was desirable, and Parliament voted 20,000 additional men for the Army (1870), and the Army Estimates for 1871 went up by nearly three million pounds. At the same time Edward Cardwell, the Secretary for War, undertook to reorganize the British Army. He abolished the antiquated and absurd system by which Army officers bought their commissions, even including the command of a regiment. He established the short service system of enlistment—six years with the colours, and six with the reserve. Finally he abolished the old regiments of foot (which were known by numbers, e.g. the 53rd) and substituted the present infantry regiments, called, chiefly, after the British shires (e.g. the Devon Regiment, the Oxford and Buckinghamshire). Each regiment had two battalions, one serving abroad, the other in Britain; this was known as the 'linked battalion' system.

Cardwell's  
Reforms

Gladstone had swept away many things with his reforming broom; the Irish Church, the exclusiveness of Oxford and Cambridge, the wellnigh sacred privileges of Army officers—all had gone. But reform cannot go on for ever; and after the Ballot Act (1872) establishing the secret vote, and the Act (1873) setting up the High Court of Justice (making the various English Courts branches of one Supreme Court), even Gladstone's energy was running out. Disraeli, in 1872, compared the members of the Treasury Bench to a 'range of exhausted volcanoes'. The General Election, held early in 1874, returned him to power.

'Exhausted  
Volcanoes'

### 3. *Lord Beaconsfield*

Disraeli's  
Second  
Ministry  
1874-80

Disraeli was in his seventieth year when, for the second time, he became Prime Minister of England. After fifty years of struggling, he had at last reached the achievement of all his hopes; it was almost, but not quite, too late. His policy as

Prime Minister was twofold. First he stole the Liberal thunder by bringing forward a programme of social reform;<sup>1</sup> secondly, he launched forth the policy of British Imperialism which his party took to their hearts. Like Gladstone's Liberalism, it was one of the main forces in British life for half a century.

(i) *Social Reform.*

First, social reform. Gladstone, in 1871, had established the Local Government Board to deal with the Poor Law and Public Health. The work of looking after the physical well-being of the people, their health, housing, and sanitation—all things neglected by former generations, misled by the teaching of *laissez-faire*—was now undertaken more and more by the State. Action was taken partly by local town councils, assisted by government grants, partly by the central government directly. To succeed, such a work had to be continuous;<sup>2</sup> and it is to the credit of Disraeli<sup>3</sup> and Richard Cross, his Home Secretary, that a powerful stimulus was given to it in the 'seventies. The Artisans' Dwellings Act (1875) enabled local authorities to purchase slum-dwellings for destruction. The Public Health Act (1875) laid down certain sanitary rules to which all owners of houses had to conform; it amended and consolidated existing laws on public health, and added some new regulations. It dealt with sewage, water-supply, nuisances, scavenging, and infectious diseases. The appointment of Medical Officers of Health was made compulsory in all districts.

Social  
Reform

Artisans'  
Dwellings  
and Public  
Health  
Acts, 1875

The smooth working of health and housing reform depended

<sup>1</sup> Social reform was the tendency of the times, and mention may be made of others who made the work of Disraeli and Cross possible, e.g. the Whigs and their Municipal Corporations Act of 1835; Cobden and Bright; the Chartists; the Trade Union and Co-operative movements; Shaftesbury; Chadwick's Public Health schemes; Ruskin's and Carlyle's attacks on Victorian complacency; and so on. See Chapters XXXVII and XLI.

<sup>2</sup> For Municipal Corporation Act (1835) and Chadwick's Public Health Act (1848), see Chap. XXXVII, § 2.

<sup>3</sup> Disraeli's record was here much better than Gladstone's. 'The blind eye which he (Gladstone) consistently turned towards local government explains some of the gravest gaps in his statesmanship.' (Ensor, *England, 1870-1914*.)

upon the co-operation of local and central authorities; and here Cross achieved success. One of the men with whom he worked was Joseph Chamberlain,<sup>1</sup> the Radical Mayor of Birmingham (1873-6), a man destined by the strange turns of Fortune's wheel to succeed Disraeli as the prophet of Imperialism. The passage of the Reform Bill of 1867, applied to municipal as well as parliamentary elections, had swept the 'old gang' out of many a corrupt borough. Birmingham was one of these, and the Birmingham Radicals soon put Joseph Chamberlain in the seats of power. Chamberlain showed what one man of energy could do to make even a huge insanitary town, as Birmingham then was, more or less fit for human habitation.

Joseph  
Chamber-  
lain,  
Mayor of  
Birming-  
ham,  
1873-6

'We bring up a population [Chamberlain told the City Council] in the dank, dreary, filthy courts and alleys. . . . We surround them with noxious influences of every kind, and place them under conditions in which the observance of even ordinary decency is impossible; and what is the result? . . . It is no more the fault of these people that they are vicious and intemperate than it is their fault that they are stunted, deformed, debilitated, and diseased.'

At the end of three years, Chamberlain was able to write:

'I may sing my *Nunc dimittis*. The Town will be parked, paved, assized, marketed, Gas-and-Watered and *improved*—all as the result of three years' active work.'

Chamberlain had carried through in Birmingham the largest slum-clearance scheme hitherto attempted. The Radical Mayor was backed up by the Conservative Government in this effort.

Municipal  
Control

The modern industrial town, with its large slums, and still larger semi-slum area—miles of ugly houses in mean streets—is still by far the greatest blot on the English landscape. One is tempted to wonder what, if anything, the Victorians did to improve such matters. To realize what they did, it is necessary

<sup>1</sup> Joseph Chamberlain, born 1836. Educated University College School; joined family business (screw-making), went to Birmingham, aged 18. Mayor of Birmingham 1873-6. M.P. for Birmingham 1876. Became Radical leader. President Board of Trade in Second Gladstone Ministry; left Gladstone on Home Rule (1886); joined Lord Salisbury's Unionist Ministry as Colonial Secretary 1895. Died 1914.

to imagine how foul, how overcrowded and insanitary our towns were *before* the work of such men as Chadwick, Disraeli, Cross, and Chamberlain. Even as it was, *laissez-faire* died hard. In London, the Metropolitan Board of Works displaced 22,000 slum-dwellers and rehoused 28,000 in eight years (1876-84). But the Board never undertook the rehousing itself; the building of the new houses was left to private enterprise—with the result that they were often as bad as the old! Still, the larger towns were forging ahead. Liverpool, Manchester, and Glasgow now ran their own water, gas, electricity, and trams—unlike London, where these things were managed, and badly managed, by private enterprise. It was a hard battle which had to be fought for public control, making for the beginnings of a decent life for the citizens.<sup>1</sup> It is hard to realize that Manchester appointed its first Medical Officer of Health in 1869, Birmingham in 1875.

(ii) *Imperialism.*

Disraeli made his first contribution to British foreign policy by a startling *coup*. In 1875 Ismail Pasha, the Khedive of Egypt, was in financial difficulties, and offered his Suez Canal Company shares for sale. Brushing aside his feeble Foreign Secretary, Lord Derby (son of the late Premier), Disraeli bought four million pounds worth of the shares (about 40 per cent. of the total) for Great Britain, which thus became the largest single owner in the Canal Company. The dramatic circumstances in which the purchase was made—entirely on Disraeli's own authority—caused great excitement at the time. Gladstone, who had no vision of the Empire, even talked of impeaching the Premier for acting without Parliament's consent. But the Suez Canal is as important to the communications of the Empire as Gibraltar, and Disraeli's purchase was one of his greatest services to his country. Two years later came another step towards Imperialism; Parliament was asked

Suez Canal  
shares  
1875

<sup>1</sup> A century ago British local authorities needed about £10,000,000 a year for the discharge of all the duties entrusted to them. To-day their yearly expenses amount to over £400,000,000, collected as rates, while the total loan debt of local authorities (counties, towns, &c.) is about £1,250,000,000.

to pass the Act making the queen Empress of India. Ridiculed at the time, this step is now generally admitted to have been wise. The new empress was proclaimed at Delhi on 1 January

Empress of  
India  
1877



EUROPE: 1865-85

Note: (i) the completion of the Union of Italy in 1870; (ii) the Union of Germany in 1871; (iii) the further disruption of the Turkish Empire both in Africa and in Europe. The inset map shows the terms of the Treaty of San Stefano (1878). (See p. 884.)

1877. A few months earlier Disraeli had been raised to the peerage as Earl of Beaconsfield.<sup>1</sup>

Meanwhile the reopening of the Eastern Question over-

<sup>1</sup> *Punch* commented on this in a brilliant cartoon: 'One good turn deserves another!'



shadowed all other issues. The rule of the Turks over their Christian subjects in Europe, inefficient at its best, was apt, at its worst, to degenerate into appalling cruelty. A rising in Bulgaria (1876) was put down by Turkish irregulars known as Bashi-Bazouks. These miscreants, whose leaders were decorated by the Turkish Government, spared neither man, woman, nor child; a hideous tale of pillage, torture, and death was soon brought to the knowledge of a horrified Europe. The numbers of the slain were unknown, but they amounted to thousands. This shocking event awoke an immediate response in Britain, where Gladstone gave a lead. In four days 40,000 copies of his pamphlet, 'The Bulgarian Horrors and the Question of the East' were sold. It contained the famous demand for the extinction of the Turkish power in Bulgaria: 'Let the Turks now carry away their abuses in the only possible manner, namely, by carrying off themselves. Their Zaptiehs and their Mudirs, their Bimbashis and their Yuzbashis, their Kaimakams and their Pashas, one and all, bag and baggage, shall, I hope, clear out from the province they have desolated and profaned.' Britain was stirred to the depths; Gladstone's appeal, and 'his warm ardour for all that is noble and good', touched a chord of nobility in the national character.

The  
Bulgarian  
Atrocities  
1876

'Bag and  
Baggage'

But Beaconsfield remembered Russia. He remembered, too, our policy, traditional since Palmerston, of supporting Turkey in order to oppose Russian advance. The issue soon became a real one; in April 1877 Russia declared war on Turkey on behalf of the Christian subjects in revolt against the Sultan. This war lasted nine months, and during it British opinion—but not Gladstone's—swung round. All the fierce old hatred of Russia surged up; memories of the Crimea were recalled. No one expressed this anti-Russian feeling more strongly than Queen Victoria, who daily pressed Lord Beaconsfield to declare war against the Tsar. Her fury against Russia knew no bounds. 'Oh! [she wrote] if the Queen were a man, she would like to go and give those Russians, whose word one cannot believe, such a beating!' The Russians were held up for many months at Plevna, the key to the Balkan passes, but at last they stormed its defences, and by the New Year (1878) they were at Adrianople. The Turks sued for peace. The British Cabinet

Russo-  
Turkish  
War  
1877-8

sent some ships to Constantinople, and we were on the brink of war. It was now that the boastful and foolish song:

Jingoism                We don't want to fight,  
                              But, by Jingo, if we do,  
                              We've got the ships, we've got the men,  
                              We've got the money too

became popular and added the word 'Jingoism' to the English language.

Treaty of San Stefano March 1878    In March 1878 Russia imposed the Treaty of San Stefano on Turkey. Lord Beaconsfield, with Bismarck, narrowly prevented a general war, and agreed to attend a European congress held at Berlin that summer. The Berlin Congress, attended by the representatives of Germany, Austria, Russia, Britain, and Turkey, settled the Eastern Question until the Balkan War of 1912. The other powers forced Russia to tear up the Treaty of San Stefano, which had created a 'Big Bulgaria' (see map, p. 882) which would have been practically a Russian protectorate and have split European Turkey into two fragments. The Treaty of Berlin divided this 'Big Bulgaria' into three parts. One part—Macedonia—was restored outright to Turkey; another was made a Turkish protectorate under the name of Eastern Rumelia;<sup>1</sup> only the remaining third was allowed to be the independent state of Bulgaria (map). Austria was given a protectorate over Bosnia and Herzegovina, Britain a protectorate over Cyprus, which Beaconsfield intended to use as an eastern naval base.

Beaconsfield had won his point; he had helped to check the advance of Russia, which loomed so large at the time. But his Foreign Secretary, Lord Salisbury, confessed years afterwards that we had 'backed the wrong horse' in supporting Turkey. And, indeed, there were several miscalculations. Bulgaria proved to be sturdily independent, not a Russian cats-paw. Austria, on the other hand, proved in the long run more dangerous than Russia, and her entry into the Balkans was one of the direct causes of the Great War.<sup>2</sup> Turkey, whom we had saved in 1878, entered that war against us. Russia, balked

<sup>1</sup> But Eastern Rumelia was joined to Bulgaria in 1885.

<sup>2</sup> See below, p. 947 (1908), and p. 951 (1914).

in Europe, accelerated her advance towards India. Finally, Cyprus was not used as a first-class naval base, its importance being overshadowed by the British occupation of Egypt (1882).

So Lord Beaconsfield brought home Peace with Honour, as he called it, from Berlin. But Imperialism could lead, as Gladstone feared, to war; it did so in South Africa and Afghanistan. The former was not Beaconsfield's fault, for his subordinates acted against his instructions. The Cabinet sent Sir Theophilus Shepstone to the Transvaal Republic (in 1877), at a moment when the question of the black and white races in South Africa had reached a serious crisis. The Boers were weak, poor, and disorganized; Shepstone found only 12s. 6d. in the Boer treasury. The neighbouring Zulus, on the other hand, were strong and warlike, under their fighting king, Cetewayo. The Boer Government was willing to abdicate in favour of Britain, though only on condition that it appeared to do so on compulsion, and so Shepstone proclaimed (April 1877) the annexation of the Transvaal. Annexation  
of the  
Transvaal  
1877

The next step, though not taken for two years, was to crush the Zulus, whose existence as an independent state was not really compatible with civilization in South Africa. Sir Bartle Frere, High Commissioner for South Africa, began a Zulu war without the Cabinet's consent (January 1879). The war opened with a minor disaster, the massacre of a British column at Isandhlwana, the news of which was badly received in England. But Lord Chelmsford broke the Zulu army at Ulundi (1879); Cetewayo was captured and deported and the whole country submitted. But, now that the Zulus were crushed, the Boers wanted their independence back again.<sup>1</sup> Zulu War  
1879

In India, as in Europe, there was the eternal Russian bug-bear—the imagined danger which never materialized. Russian intrigues in Afghanistan alarmed the Viceroy, Lord Lytton, who sent a British army into the country to depose the pro-Russian amir (1878). A new amir was installed, but a few months later the country rose against the British domination. Eventually Sir Frederick Roberts relieved Kandahar by his famous cross-country march from Kabul (1880), and the British army was saved. When Gladstone came into power in England, Second  
Afghan  
War  
1878-80

<sup>1</sup> For the sequel see next section.

he reversed the 'forward' policy in Afghanistan, and the British withdrew from the country; an amir, Abdur Rahman, on the whole friendly to Britain, reigned for the next twenty years (1881-1901).

Midlothian Campaign 1879 In the winter of 1879, Gladstone, who was supposed to have retired into private life, suddenly launched his Midlothian Campaign. All the fire of his eloquence was directed against the new Imperialism—Beaconsfieldism as he called it. His energy, amazing in a man of seventy, swept the north of England and Midlothian itself. The Afghan and Zulu wars were still raging; the memory of the Bulgarian atrocities was still there to condemn the policy enshrined in the Berlin Treaty. The result, at the ensuing General Election, was not in doubt; the Liberals, rejoicing in a great victory, were returned to power. Gladstone, whose sense of humour was never his strong point, wrote (to a friend) that his victory had 'given joy to a large majority of the civilized world'.

Death of Lord Beaconsfield, 1881 Lord Beaconsfield died the next year, worn out by his exertions. The brave old man, jesting to the last, though ravaged by gout and a prey to the torments of loneliness, was a gallant figure. Lord Beaconsfield—Dizzy, as he was affectionately called—lacked the moral fervour of his rival, but he was very human: human in his faithfulness to his friends, human, too, in his weaknesses. He made many mistakes, but he loved his country, and always acted in the belief that she had a great destiny to fulfil in that future into which he, perhaps, saw farther than most men.

It is easy to condemn Disraeli's foreign policy as meddling, or Gladstone's as indecisive: and posterity has a difficult task in judging between these opinions. Gladstone had the more lofty conception: that of an ethical code, binding the whole of humanity. He would rather suffer a defeat, or fall into unpopularity, than commit an injustice. Disraeli's conception was narrower: Britain, and Britain's interests, came first and last. For a course of policy to be popular was a great point in its favour, apart from its intrinsic merits. Human nature being what it is, Disraeli's policy generally held a greater glamour for his contemporaries, and that glamour leaves its mark even on judgements made to-day.

#### 4. Gladstone's Second Ministry

Gladstone's Second Ministry was rather a surprise to the country; it largely consisted of members of the House of Lords,<sup>1</sup> and so stressed the Whig rather than the Radical element in the Liberal Party. Lord Granville, who was nearly as old as Gladstone, took the Foreign Office; Lord Hartington the India Office. Two prominent Radicals, John Bright and Joseph Chamberlain, were given minor posts. The Radical element in the country was dissatisfied, but every one assumed that Gladstone, who was seventy, would soon retire; he did not retire for another fourteen years! The Conservative Opposition in the Commons was feebly led by Sir Stafford Northcote. A group of younger Conservatives, including Lord Randolph Churchill, revolted against Northcote's leadership, and pressed for bolder methods; they became known as the Fourth Party.<sup>2</sup> Lord Salisbury led the Conservatives in the Lords.

Agricultural depression<sup>3</sup> and even the beginnings of industrial depression, both due to foreign competition, cast their shadows over the eighties; for the first time for some decades there was serious unemployment. The trouble in the country was matched by troubles abroad, where Gladstone's record was one of unrelieved gloom. The first signs came from South Africa. The Transvaal Boers fully expected Gladstone to give them back their independence, especially as he had described the annexation (of 1877) as dishonourable. As he did nothing, they rose in revolt, and routed a British force under Sir George Colley at Majuba Hill (1881). Gladstone sent Sir Frederick Roberts with reinforcements; but, before Roberts could arrive on the scene, the Premier changed his mind and decided to make peace. The Convention of Pretoria (1881) granted the Boers their independence. Gladstone thus expressed his belief in the right of small nations to determine their own affairs, but he was much criticized for the manner and the time of his gift.

More than anything else, the Irish Question harassed this Ministry. In spite of Gladstone's efforts in his former period

<sup>1</sup> The Duke of Argyll, the Earls Granville and Spencer, and Earls of Selborne, Kimberley, and Northbrook held the chief positions in the Cabinet. <sup>2</sup> The third was the Irish Party. <sup>3</sup> See next chapter.

Gladstone's  
Second  
Ministry  
1880-5

First Boer  
War, 1881

Majuba

Ireland

of power, the state of Ireland grew worse and worse. The agricultural depression, which bore hardly enough on industrialized Britain, threatened Ireland with ruin. Tenants could not pay their rents, and evictions were frequent. The Irish Land League was formed (1879) to resist the landlords, and

Parnell  
and the  
Land  
League

Parnell,<sup>1</sup> who became its leader, gave the following advice: 'What are you to do to a tenant who bids for a farm from which his neighbour has been evicted?' he asked. 'Kill him, shoot him,' replied his audience. Parnell replied with cold intensity: 'You must show him on the road-side when you meet him, you must show him in the street of the town, you must show him at the shop-counter, you must show him at the fair and at the market-place, and even in the house of worship . . . by isolating him from his kind as if he were a leper of old, you must show him your detestation of the crime he has committed.' This speech shows what manner of man Parnell was. His advice was followed, and first put into operation against a certain Captain Boycott—a fact which has added the word 'boycott' to the English language.

Boycotting

Irish crime

But there were worse elements than this in Ireland. The terrible series of midnight crimes—known as 'Moonlighting'—when landlords were dragged out of bed and shot, stained this period of Irish history. No life was safe; Irish society was dissolving into chaos. Parnell, who drew the line at murder, but not at anything else which would make English government impossible in Ireland, was also active on this side of the Channel. He studied English parliamentary procedure in order to thwart it. The autocratic leader of a solid phalanx of Irish Home Rulers, he trained his party to obstruct business at Westminster. The device known as the closure was eventually employed against him; otherwise every minor question might

<sup>1</sup> Charles Stuart Parnell, born 1846. A landlord; and a Protestant. Leader of Irish Parliamentary party, 1874; President of the Land League, 1879; imprisoned in Kilmainham, 1881; released, and came to terms with Gladstone. Held the balance between the English parties after the General Election of December 1885. Influence declined after defeat of Gladstone's First Home Rule Bill, 1886. Unjustly charged with complicity in Irish crimes by *The Times* in articles called 'Parnellism and Crime' (1887). Ruined by appearing as co-respondent in the divorce of Mrs. O'Shea (1890). Died 1891.

have been debated for days and parliamentary business suspended indefinitely.

In 1881 Gladstone introduced a Second Irish Land Act and also a Coercion Act to deal with crime in Ireland. Armed with this Act, which gave him power to arrest and imprison suspects without trial, W. E. Forster, of Education fame, now Chief Secretary for Ireland, tried to put down crime. He arrested Parnell and the Irish leaders, and put them in prison. But Gladstone came to terms with Parnell behind Forster's back, and by the Kilmainham Treaty (Parnell was in Kilmainham Jail) released Parnell on condition he would use his influence to restore order. Forster at once resigned. Soon afterwards his successor, Lord Frederick Cavendish, went over to Ireland to take up his duties. On his arrival in Dublin he walked across Phoenix Park, accompanied by the Under-Secretary, Mr. Burke. A gang of assassins was waiting for Burke; they did not know who Lord Frederick was. They rushed on Burke, armed with long surgical knives. Lord Frederick went to Burke's assistance, and both men were stabbed to death. The assassins escaped. A thrill of horror went through England at this news, and most Englishmen became convinced that harsher methods would pay better. Lord Spencer, the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, put down crime with a firm hand. He caught and brought to justice the Phoenix Park murderers. Parnell was honestly horrified by the murders, and was more subdued for a time. Gladstone, as we shall see, was not satisfied with the mere suppression of crime, and gradually his mind moved towards Home Rule as the solution.<sup>1</sup>

Meanwhile the activity of the Radicals, especially Chamberlain, was causing a tense situation in the Cabinet. The Whig members, like Lord Hartington and Lord Granville, who were not easily distinguishable from Tories, were shocked to the core by Chamberlain's speeches. One speech, in particular, delivered in 1883, shook the Cabinet and horrified the queen. Chamberlain had been attacked by Lord Salisbury, the Conservative leader. 'Lord Salisbury', said Chamberlain in reply, 'constitutes himself the spokesman of a class—of the class to which he himself belongs, who toil not neither do they spin,

<sup>1</sup> See next chapter.

Forster  
Chief  
Secretary  
1880-2

Phoenix  
Park  
murders  
1882

Radical  
activities

whose fortunes, as in his case, have originated by grants made in times gone by for the services which courtiers rendered kings. . . .’ It was Chamberlain who led the campaign, in the Cabinet and in the House, for the further extension of the franchise. In vain Sir Stafford Northcote protested in the Commons against ‘giving Mr. Chamberlain all he wants’. Gladstone had made up his mind—not always an easy process—that to extend the franchise would be both politic and just.

Third  
Reform  
Act, 1884

The result was the Third Reform Act (1884) which, with some few exceptions, enfranchised every householder in the country. For the first time the agricultural labourer was given the vote. This measure was followed by a Redistribution Act (1885), giving us our modern electoral divisions,<sup>1</sup> based on population.

Egypt

Throughout this second Gladstone Ministry, the Egyptian entanglement loomed large. The Khedive Ishmail, who had sold his Suez Canal shares to the British Government, was a spendthrift. He borrowed vast sums of money (lent by European investors), and had at length submitted Egyptian finances to the dual control of British and French bankers. Ishmail, deposed in 1879, was succeeded by his son Tewfik, who, like his father, was dependent on these foreign financiers to keep the country out of bankruptcy. But Arabi Pasha, a native officer, rallied Egyptian feeling against all outside control, whether Turkish, British, or French. Arabi forced the young Khedive to make him his minister; from that moment the lives of the thousands of Europeans in Cairo were unsafe. Gladstone reluctantly sent a fleet to Alexandria; there was a riot in the city, and fifty Europeans were murdered. The British fleet then bombarded the forts,<sup>2</sup> and landed some troops. Later, Sir Garnet Wolseley’s army defeated the Egyptians under Arabi at the battle of Tel-el-Kebir (1882). The British army remained in Egypt to protect the lives and property of Europeans. Such was the first result of the landing in Egypt. There was to be a sequel, equally unforeseen and undesired.

Arabi  
Pasha

Tel-el-  
Kebir  
1882

<sup>1</sup> For further details of the Acts of 1884 and 1885, see p. 805.

<sup>2</sup> A French fleet also appeared off Alexandria, but did not join in the bombardment or in subsequent operations. The French did not want Britain to intervene, and pursued a dog-in-the-manger policy for twenty years.



The Khedive Ishmail, among his other extravagant acts, had embarked on the conquest of the Sudan, thus extending the limits of Egyptian power far to the south of his own country, up to the borders of Abyssinia. Among those who helped him to rule the Sudan was an Englishman, General Gordon, a remarkable man who established a strange ascendancy over the Sudanese tribes (1874-9). But not long after Gordon left the country, a Mohammedan prophet, calling himself the Mahdi or Messiah, proclaimed a Holy War against all infidels. By 1883 the Mahdi had conquered the Sudan. The Egyptian government sent against him an army under a British commander, Colonel Hicks; but this army was ambushed and annihilated (1883).

The Mahdi  
in the  
Sudan

Gladstone now reluctantly decided that another British officer must be sent to withdraw the Egyptian garrisons from the Sudan. He chose General Gordon (January 1884), who went at once to Egypt and thence up the Nile to Khartoum. But, once there, Gordon acted on his own responsibility. Instead of evacuating the country at once, he waited, evidently hoping that Sir Evelyn Baring, our representative at Cairo, would decide after all to hold on to the Sudan. But neither Baring nor the British Government was prepared to do this. By the summer Gordon had made no move, and soon it was a question of sending another force to relieve him. For the Mahdi was coming up against Khartoum; it was too late to go on; it would soon be too late to retreat. Gladstone hesitated—many months were wasted. When at last, that winter, troops under General Wolseley advanced on Khartoum, they found only ruins. Two days before their arrival, the Mahdi had attacked; the British and Egyptians were massacred, and Gordon himself was slain.

Gordon at  
Khartoum  
1884

For Gladstone the tragedy at Khartoum was the last straw. Everything had gone wrong with this ministry—Majuba, Ireland, and now Khartoum. The strain between the Whigs and the Radicals in the Cabinet was becoming unbearable. In June 1885 the Government was defeated on the Budget, and Gladstone resigned. Lord Salisbury took office for a few months, pending a general election (December), the momentous results of which must be told in another chapter (Chap. XLII).

Death of  
Gordon  
Jan. 1885

Fall of  
Gladstone's  
Ministry  
June 1885

## DATE SUMMARY: MID-VICTORIAN PERIOD (1852-85)

## HOME AFFAIRS

## FOREIGN AND IMPERIAL

## ABERDEEN, PALMERSTON, AND DERBY (1852-65)

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1852-5 Aberdeen Ministry                  | 1852-70 Napoleon III (France)                    |
| 1853 Gladstone—Free Trade Budget          | 1854 Bloemfontein Convention (Boers)             |
|   | 1854-6 CRIMEAN WAR                               |
| 1855-8 First Palmerston Ministry          | 1855 Self-government to four Australian colonies |
|   | 1856 Self-government to New Zealand              |
|   | Fall of Sebastopol. Treaty of Paris              |
|   | 1857 INDIAN MUTINY                               |
| 1858-9 Second Derby Ministry              |  |
| 1859 <i>ORIGIN OF SPECIES</i><br>(Darwin) |  |
| 1859-65 Second Palmerston Ministry        | 1859-60 ITALIAN UNITY                            |
| 1860 Gladstone—Free Trade Budget          |  |
| 1861 Prince Consort <i>d.</i>             | 1861-5 American Civil War                        |
| 1862 Post Office Savings Bank             |  |
| 1865 Palmerston <i>d.</i>                 | 1864-5 Schleswig-Holstein Question               |

## THE ADVENT OF LIBERALISM (1865-74)

- |                                  |  |
|----------------------------------|--|
| 1865-6 Russell Ministry          | 1866 Austro-Prussian War                 |
| 1866-8 Third Derby Ministry      | 1867 DOMINION OF CANADA                  |
| 1867 SECOND REFORM ACT           | Karl Marx— <i>Das Kapital</i>            |
| 1868 Disraeli Ministry           |  |
| 1868-74 First Gladstone Ministry |  |
| 1869 Irish Church Act            |  |
| 1870 Irish Land Act              | 1870-1 FRANCO-PRUSSIAN WAR               |
| EDUCATION ACT                    |  |
| 1871 Cardwell's Army Reforms     |  |
| 1872 Ballot Act                  |  |
| Football Cup Finals begin        |  |
|                                  | BEACONSFIELD (1874-80)                   |
| 1875 Public Health Act           | 1875 Suez Canal shares                   |
| Telephone invented               |  |
|                                  | 1876 Bulgarian Atrocities                |
|                                  | 1877 Victoria Empress of India           |
|                                  | Transvaal annexed                        |
| 1878 Salvation Army              | 1877-8 Russo-Turkish War                 |
|                                  | 1878 Treaty of San Stefano               |
|                                  | TREATY OF BERLIN                         |
|                                  | 1878-80 Second Afghan War                |
| 1879 Midlothian Campaign         | 1879 Dual Alliance (Austria and Germany) |
| Irish Land League                | 1879 Zulu War                            |

## GLADSTONE'S SECOND MINISTRY (1880-5)

- |                             |                                       |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1880-2 Forster in Ireland   |                                       |
| 1881 Beaconsfield <i>d.</i> | 1881 First Boer War. ✕ Majuba         |
| Carlyle <i>d.</i>           |                                       |
| 1882 Phoenix Park murders   | 1882 British in Egypt. ✕ Tel-el-Kebir |
|                             | TRIPLE ALLIANCE (Germany,             |
|                             | Austria, Italy)                       |
| 1884 THIRD REFORM ACT       | 1885 Gordon killed at Khartoum        |

## XLI

### THE VICTORIAN AGE

#### 1. *The Triumphs of Science and Industry*

ON 21 June 1887 Queen Victoria attained the fiftieth anniversary of her accession to the throne. The Jubilee celebrations which marked this event were probably more widely advertised, in the press and elsewhere, than any similar previous event in our history. The figure of the old queen was the centre of popular affection, which was demonstrated as Victoria drove in state to the Abbey, surrounded by her sons and grandsons and numerous representatives of the Empire and foreign Powers. The Jubilee was also made the occasion of a Colonial Conference, the first of its kind.<sup>1</sup>

But, though the bonfires blazed and the bands played 'God save the Queen', it was not only personal loyalty to Victoria that filled the public mind. The people of Britain, in 1887, looked back over the preceding half-century with feelings of pride and thankfulness, not unmixed with self-congratulation. In this chapter we may look back with them, though we see those fifty years in a different perspective.

When Victoria ascended the throne—a generation after Waterloo—Britain was a discontented, poverty-stricken country, a prey to many social evils, her people half-starving and on the verge of revolution. Poverty and distress, and discontent too, still existed in 1887. But men could now point with pride to the immense strides which had been made in relieving such distress by both public works and private charity. The figures showing the decrease in crime are perhaps the most remarkable. In 1836 there were 52,000 British convicts at home or in the colonies; in 1885, although the population had nearly doubled in the interval, there were only 9,000 convicts. This is explained partly by a decrease in lawlessness, but more by the increasing humaneness of the penal code.

Apart from the decrease of crime and of the worst kinds of

<sup>1</sup> See below, p. 923.

Population poverty, there were many other sources of pride for our Victorian ancestors in 1887. The first and most striking change was the increase in population—then regarded as a source of pride in itself. Between the census of 1831 and that of 1891 the population of Great Britain doubled, being 16 millions in the former year, 33 millions in the latter. These figures are not so remarkable, indeed, as the corresponding figures for the United States,<sup>1</sup> but they are remarkable enough. Still more wonderful was the increase in trade. British trade had boomed during the 'fifties, and in the Jubilee Year Britain still towered above her neighbours. In that year, as for the past twenty years, British foreign trade considerably exceeded that of the next two European countries, France and Germany, put together; and, though the U.S.A. was rapidly gaining ground, her foreign Trade figures trade did not yet reach half the British figure.<sup>2</sup>

Britain, in fact, still kept the lead which the great inventions of the eighteenth century had given her. Her output of coal, which fed the factories of the world, was still far ahead of all competitors. Between 1870 and 1880 the average annual production of British coal was 130 million tons, nearly double the production of Germany, France, and Belgium (our most serious European rivals) combined. About half the British coal produced was exported.

Iron and steel In railway building, again, Britain had been first, and for long she kept the lead, a fact which alone gave her an immense pull in modern industrial conditions. British capital and British iron were also used in constructing railways in India and other parts of the world. In shipping our supremacy was no less marked. Between 1850 and 1880 the British mercantile marine rose from 3¼ to 7¼ million tons, while the American marine, which came next on the list, still remained below two million

<sup>1</sup> POPULATION . . . 1821-81  
(in millions)

France . . . . .	30	37	(Note the small French increase, and the huge increase in America. The Irish population declined.)
Germany. . . . .	21	45	
United States of America . . . . .	9	50	
Great Britain and Ireland . . . . .	20	35	
Great Britain alone . . . . .	14	30	

<sup>2</sup> Figures for foreign trade in millions of £ (1889): United Kingdom—740; Germany—367; France—311; United States of America—320.



THE VICTORIAN AGE

A country house group; an early photograph taken about 1860.

tons. One reason for this was the substitution of iron for wooden ships—another British invention. Nasmyth's steam hammer, used for forging iron plates, was invented in 1839. The first iron-clad warship was built in 1860. The Cunard Company placed their first iron steamer on the Atlantic route in 1865. In the decade 1870–80 iron steamships ousted wooden sailing-ships from most of the waterways of the world. Britain produced (1870) 6 million out of a total world output of 12 million tons of iron. Later, steel was largely used for ship-building. The Bessemer process for making steel cheaply (patented 1856) brought down the price from £40 to £5 a ton. Here again Britain led the way and kept the lead until the 'nineties.<sup>1</sup> Parsons' first turbine ship, the *Turbinia*, made a great stir in 1897, and revealed how the use of turbines made possible sensational speeds.

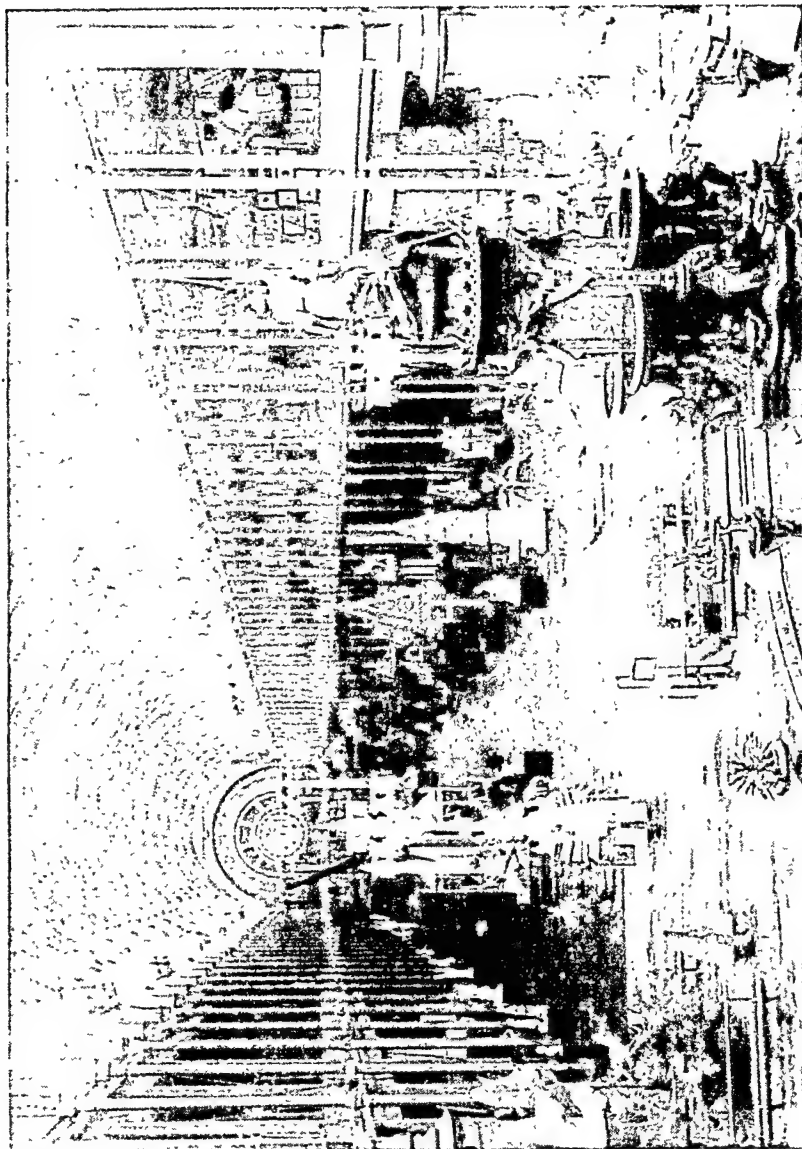
Britain's  
lead

The above figures give some idea of the outstanding position of Britain in world trade in the middle of the nineteenth century. No wonder it gave ground for pride, even for complacency. But it was a position which could not last. The first steam-engines and the first railways were invented in this country, and coal and iron were here to hand in large quantities. But other countries, if slower, were bound in time to develop efficient railway systems; other countries, especially Germany and the United States of America, were as rich or richer than Britain in mineral wealth. But the possibility that Britain would eventually be caught up and even passed in the industrial race was scarcely considered during the hey-day of Victorian prosperity. The next fifty years were to tell a different tale.

Medical  
science

Among the greatest benefits conferred by science on humanity have been those resulting from the labours of doctors and chemists. Dr. James Simpson, of Edinburgh, discovered, almost by accident, the effects of administering chloroform, which he first tried on himself (1847). When Simpson found that operations could be painlessly performed with the aid of this drug, an immense burden of human suffering was lifted. Another momentous discovery was made by the French chemist,

<sup>1</sup> In 1895 Germany produced 7½ million tons of steel, Britain less than 6 millions. But Britain's mercantile marine was still supreme.



THE GOLDEN AGE OF THE VICTORIAN ERA

A contemporary photograph of the Great Exhibition of 1851, for which the Crystal Palace (burned in 1936) was built in Hyde Park.

Pasteur (1822-95), whose experiments eventually led to the adoption of inoculation. Pasteur's researches did much to throw light on the nature of bacteria. While Pasteur was experimenting, a great English surgeon, Lister, was practising in the wards of a Glasgow hospital. Lister found that a very large percentage of patients undergoing operations never recovered from their wounds, and that this mortality was due to septic poisoning. Lister thought of a way to keep the wound free from germs; he was the first to use (from about 1864) antiseptics, such as carbolic acid. This treatment has saved tens of thousands of lives—'more lives than all the wars of the age have thrown away'. Thirty years later (1897) Sir Ronald Ross discovered that malaria was to be traced to the bite of the mosquito, whose haunts could henceforth be destroyed. Malaria was the most widespread of tropical diseases, and the work of Ross, it was said, 'made one quarter of the globe habitable'.

Numerous inventions It would be interesting to compile a list of the many useful inventions which brightened the lives of our Victorian ancestors. Among others we may note the bicycle, the camera, gas and electric light, the telephone, and the typewriter. It is difficult to imagine modern life without any of these things. The bicycle has been seen in many forms, including the quaint 'penny-farthing', with one very large and one very small wheel. In its improved form it became a late-Victorian craze, though critics regarded it as a most dangerous invention. The camera, too, has had a long history; the first photographs in our family albums are those of our mid-Victorian relations (see p. 895). Gas as an illuminant came into use just after the Napoleonic wars: it was universally used during the early Victorian age. Electric lighting was made possible by Swan in England and by Edison in America at almost the same time: the two inventors joined hands and patented the Ediswan electric lamp. The telephone was invented (1877) by a Scotsman with the appropriate name of Bell. The typewriter was an American invention, and English business houses were at first too conservative to adopt it for general use.



## 2. *The Problems of Industry*

While the iron and steel and coal trades were booming, and while science was adding in a remarkable way to the amenities of daily life, the oldest and most important of industries had suffered a definite set-back. Agriculture had been the mainstay of the life of Britain, as of all healthy countries, throughout her history. The farmers, though (since 1846) they were no longer 'protected', prospered till the late 'seventies of the nineteenth century. Then the blows began to fall: by 1895 the industry was to a great extent ruined. The main reason for this calamity was the import of cheap American corn in large quantities, following on the rapid westward expansion of America, the farming of the rich virgin soil of the prairies, the building of the American railways, and the development of cheap ocean-going steamer transport. All these things were rapidly pushed forward in the middle decades of the century. The fast steamer now also began to bring frozen<sup>1</sup> meat from Australasia and from the Argentine. Down went the price of corn and meat before the prairie prices. Cheap food benefited the consumer, but the British farmer suffered. Other European countries<sup>2</sup> put up tariffs to 'protect' their own farmers from foreign competition. Britain alone did not do so, although Disraeli, whose power had been founded on a defence of the Corn Laws, was then Prime Minister. A tariff might have helped British farming between 1870 and 1880; but it was assumed, since industry was booming under Free Trade, that agriculture, too, could take care of itself.<sup>3</sup>

The results of this policy were not long in appearing. In 1877 English wheat was selling at 56s. 9d. a quarter; in 1886 it had dropped to 31s. By the latter year, the English wheatlands had shrunk by a million acres, or about 28 per cent., and

<sup>1</sup> The first frozen mutton from New Zealand reached London in 1882.

<sup>2</sup> Cobden expected that other countries would follow Britain's example of Free Trade; but they did not do so. Nevertheless Britain's long stand for Free Trade is regarded by some as among the most creditable pages in her history.

<sup>3</sup> Free Traders regarded Protection as subsidizing the farmers at the expense of the community at large. But one argument for the policy of 'protecting' farmers was that it would make the country less dependent on foreign food in case of war.

British  
farming  
and  
American  
com-  
petition

Decline of  
agriculture

this shrinkage continued till 1914. Britain's dependence on foreign grain naturally increased. In the decade 1830-40 we had imported only 2 per cent. of our corn; in 1880-90 we imported 45 per cent. It may be argued that we could not hope, in this small island, to feed our huge population with home-grown corn. But the decline of British agriculture—which was intensified in the 'nineties—was none the less grievous, and bore very hardly on the farming community. There were 92,000 fewer farm labourers<sup>1</sup> at work in 1881 than ten years previously. The change struck a blow not merely at the farmers and farm labourers, but at our whole national life. The *urbanization* that has gone on ever since in Britain is far from an unmixed blessing. It is not natural for man to live divorced from the soil; nor has our machine-made, town-dwelling civilization, with all its boasted triumphs, produced anything that can compensate for the loss of Nature.

Meanwhile, an important change was coming over the whole structure of British business. The industrialists of the early nineteenth century had been enterprising men, often of poor education, but with technical or business ability which had earned them their individual fortunes. The great iron foundries and the early cotton mills had been the product of one-man firms, and control had been handed down from father to son. But from about the middle of the century a far-reaching change took place. Instead of the old family-owned concerns, industry passed more and more under the control of Limited Liability Companies. The practical business of these companies was actually managed by Boards of Directors, but any member of the general public might become a shareholder in the concern by investing his or her savings in it. It is therefore true to say that every shareholder is a capitalist. This system, unknown on any large scale to previous generations, now became typical of British business. The habit of investment in industrial stock became very widespread, especially among the middle class, and it soon became possible for a section of the community (known as the *rentier* class) to live

The New  
Capitalists  
—Limited  
Liability  
Companies

Dividends

<sup>1</sup> Joseph Arch's agricultural labourers' trade-union movement (1872-4), partly conducted by dissenting preachers, succeeded in raising labourers' wages, hours, and conditions in certain areas.

entirely on dividends, i.e. on income derived from the profits of industry. The old type of capitalist thus tended to disappear; the new investor-capitalist was not as a rule interested in the conditions under which the industry was carried on so long as his dividends were regularly paid. A very large number of people now draw part of their income from interest on capital. In a sense, every one with a deposit—for example, in the Post Office Savings Bank—becomes a capitalist.

The change in the structure of British business coincided with another important development—the rise of joint-stock banking. The Bank of England (founded 1694) was a joint stock bank,<sup>1</sup> but an Act passed after the South Sea Bubble had prohibited the foundation of other banks on this principle. Huskisson (in 1826) removed this prohibition from banks more than sixty-five miles from London, and later (1835) abolished Banks it altogether. The result was that joint stock banks sprang up in large numbers. The banking habit was developed among the middle classes. Bank deposits had reached some 300 millions in 1851, and the whole of this money was available for investment in industry. The habit of saving was a Victorian virtue, and was not confined to the well-to-do. Working-class savings were also tapped. Gladstone, by founding the Post Office Savings Bank (1861), provided a means whereby the poorer people could invest their savings; and their savings P.O. Savings Bank also found their way into friendly and co-operative societies and trade unions.

Meanwhile the conflict between employers and employed continued. The main object of the business men—the directors and managers of industrial firms—was to make larger profits for the purpose of paying large dividends and creating substantial reserves. The main object of the employed, on the other hand, was to increase wages. The trade unions<sup>2</sup> con- Trade Unions

<sup>1</sup> A bank formed on the basis of a joint stock, i.e. stock or capital contributed and owned by a number of persons jointly. If the undertaking of a Joint Stock Co. fails, the investors cannot be made to pay more than the sum they invested—this is the principle of 'limited liability' (established since 1862).

<sup>2</sup> In 1868 the principal unions sent delegates to Manchester to discuss their legal position. This meeting is usually regarded as the beginning of the Trades Union Congress.

tinued to flourish and to increase their membership. The quiet progress made on the model of the Amalgamated Society of Engineers (1851) is noteworthy. Trade unions carried on a steady battle for better conditions of labour, shorter hours, and higher wages. Their demands were nearly always resisted, but sometimes a compromise was effected.

In this conflict between labour and the directors of industry, the State did not interfere. It may be as well here to sum up the progress (or the reverse) which the principle of State control had made since the beginning of the century. First, during this period, the principle of State control of foreign trade had been abandoned altogether; 'Free Trade' was now Britain's watchword, and it was assumed that all trade was best left unregulated. Free Trade, at first, suited us in a world in which we had no serious industrial competitors; but while it fed the population it helped to depress agriculture, where there was American competition. Secondly, the State interfered with the conditions of labour so far as to pass the numerous Factory and Mine Acts and the Employers' Liability Acts<sup>1</sup> (from 1880), but it did not attempt to interfere in the endless wages disputes between masters and men. But it regarded the trade unions with less disfavour, and gave them some legal protection. Thirdly, English education was now partly under State control. Lastly, in such matters as Public Health and Housing—the public social services—some very important laws had been passed which asserted the principle of State control.<sup>2</sup>

The question arises whether, if State control had been applied oftener or earlier, it might have promoted the national well-being. It is fairly obvious, for instance, that if a stringent Town Planning Act had been in force, say in 1800,<sup>3</sup> we should have been spared our present squalid towns, built haphazard all over industrial England. And Macaulay, in an interesting

<sup>1</sup> The Employers' Liability Acts made the employer liable for any accident (with compensation), except that caused by the workman's own carelessness.

<sup>2</sup> The Insurance Acts against illness and unemployment and Old Age Pensions belong to the twentieth century. See pp. 942 and 945.

<sup>3</sup> Compare the inadequate control exercised during the years 1920–35 over building activity. During these years large portions of southern England were permanently disfigured by ugly and uncontrolled building.

speech, once pointed out what might have been done had the Railway Age been subjected to State control:

‘Fifteen years ago it became evident that railroads would soon, in every part of the kingdom, supersede to a great extent the old highways. The tracing of the new routes which were to join all the chief cities . . . of the island was a matter of the highest national importance. *But unfortunately those who should have acted refused to interfere.* That the whole society was interested in having a good system of internal communications seemed to be forgotten. The speculator who wanted a large dividend on his shares, the landowner who wanted a large price for his acres, obtained a full hearing. But nobody applied to be heard on behalf of the community.’<sup>1</sup>

Gladstone, as President of the Board of Trade, had in 1844 suggested the acquisition of the railways by the State. This would have been too late for planning purposes, but might have resulted in great improvements—standardization and the reduction of exorbitant freight dues. The railways were never nationalized, however, in spite of Gladstone’s promising move.

### 3. Religion

Lord Palmerston, whose life lasted till the middle of Victoria’s reign, was a survival from a former era. With his easy-going manners, his somewhat lax principles, and his thorough enjoyment of life, he was a true child of the eighteenth century. No other prominent man of the Victorian period—the foreigner, Disraeli, alone excepted—was in the least like Palmerston in character or habits. The other great Victorians—Gladstone, Carlyle, John Bright, Tennyson, Newman—were all remarkable for their seriousness, and for the definite religious bias which coloured their whole outlook. The word Victorian is now used, often in disparagement, to describe this attitude to life; but we should beware of underrating a generation which achieved so much. The Victorians took their work, their politics, and their religion seriously; they were always earnest in all that they did. They put their faith in Progress and in the Evangelical religion.

The Great Victorians

<sup>1</sup> Macaulay, speech on Fielden’s Ten Hours Bill, 22 May 1846.

The  
Evangelical  
Revival

The Court of Victoria, which was modelled on the severe standards set by Prince Albert, reflected the character of the age. But the Victorian outlook was much more than a reflection of the Victorian Court; it had its roots deeper in the past. It was, in its essence, a reaction from the irreligious, easy-going eighteenth century. It was also the legacy which the Methodists, who reformed the eighteenth century, left to the nineteenth. Few men have had a greater influence on English life than John Wesley. The Methodist Movement was his creation, but this was only part of his achievement. The whole generation which grew up after his death (1791) was affected by the Methodist Revival, and the Church of England itself was as much transformed. The word 'Evangelical' (which means 'according to Gospel teaching') has been coined to cover all varieties of this faith. The Evangelical religion, says a recent French historian, was 'the moral cement of English society'.

This revival, the most powerful religious movement in England since the Reformation,<sup>1</sup> was an attempt to lead a life based on the teaching of the Gospels. It led on the one hand—and this was its greatest achievement—to a more humane way of life than any previous age had known. On the other hand, it led to a strictness of personal conduct which can only be compared to the Puritanism of the seventeenth century, and which was accompanied, like the earlier Puritanism, by narrowness of outlook and a certain lack of charity towards offenders against the moral code.

The humanitarian movement<sup>2</sup> went hand in hand with a revived Christianity; and, like its parent Methodism, the Evangelical revival gave a great impetus to social reform.

The  
humane  
spirit

<sup>1</sup> 'No one will ever understand Victorian England who does not appreciate that among highly civilized, in contradistinction to more primitive, countries, it was one of the most religious that the world has known.' (Ensor, *England, 1870-1914*.)

<sup>2</sup> For other examples of this movement, see Chap. XXXVII, § 2—Wilberforce and abolition of slavery, 1833; Russell's Acts of 1837 and 1841 abolishing death-penalty for all but the gravest crimes; Shaftesbury's Act of 1840 for boy chimney-sweepers; Act of 1842 prohibiting women working in mines. Note also Cardwell's abolition of flogging in the army in peace-time, 1868.

Both Wilberforce, the anti-slavery crusader, and Lord Shaftesbury, the factory-reform hero, were prominent Evangelicals. And, if these two were the greatest, there were thousands of others no less eager to show that a living faith in Christianity meant a battle against social evils. Two examples will serve to illustrate the charitable efforts of this age. Dr. Barnardo's Homes to rescue slum children from their surroundings was founded in 1870. The Salvation Army, which has done so much good work especially among the poorest sections of society (and it both was and is a striking example of Evangelical religion) was founded by William Booth in 1878.

Dr. Barnardo and General Booth

The career of Lord Shaftesbury is a good example of Evangelical Christianity. His long life (1801-85) was filled with good works, and few men have done so much, by a life of unselfish devotion, to reduce the sum of human misery. But Shaftesbury's mind exhibited all the narrowness with which the Victorians have so often been reproached. His Evangelical creed could not tolerate the slightest disagreement. Like the great majority of Victorians, he accepted the literal truth of every word in the Bible, though men like Matthew Arnold tried to point out the narrowness of this view. Shaftesbury's attitude to the observance of Sunday was absolutely rigid. 'From time to time', says his biographer, 'reformers tried to let a little light and colour into the prison that Sunday had become for the English people; they never caught Shaftesbury napping.'<sup>1</sup> He prevented bands from playing in the London parks on Sundays; he prevented the Sunday opening of the British Museum.<sup>2</sup> He did all this with the same absolute conviction that he was doing good as when he brought before Parliament his Bills to relieve the suffering of children in mines and factories, or to lighten the hard lot of the boy chimney-sweeps.

Lord Shaftesbury

The Victorian Sunday

The Victorian Sunday undoubtedly bore harshly on children, who were forced to put away their playthings and become unnaturally quiet once a week. John Ruskin (1819-1900) developed, he said, 'the inveterate habit of being unhappy all Sunday', and could remember, as a child, that 'the horror of

<sup>1</sup> Hammond, *Lord Shaftesbury*.

<sup>2</sup> Museums and art galleries were not opened on Sundays until 1896.

Evangelical  
discipline

Sunday used to cast its prescient gloom as far back in the week as Friday'. In the Ruskin family, when John was middle-aged and a famous man, his parents used to cover up his valuable pictures with dark screens on Sundays. The outlook of the Ruskin family was by no means unusual;<sup>1</sup> the Evangelical discipline to which John was subjected was quite normal. Family prayers and daily Bible-readings were the custom among a wide circle of upper- and middle-class families. Attendance at Church and Sunday School was almost universally observed, except in the new and neglected industrial regions.

Dr. Arnold

But all this Victorian discipline<sup>2</sup> had its good points, and it helped to mould the characters of some of the greatest Victorians. The religion of the Victorian family was carried into the schools by the tradition set up by Arnold of Rugby, and carried on by other Victorian headmasters of the next generation. Dr. Arnold, in the fourteen years of his Headmastership (1828-42), did much to change the character of English public schools. Before his day, these schools had been described as 'nurseries of vice'; the boys were only kept in order by the birch rod. It is recorded that Keate on one day flogged eighty boys, though he did much in his twenty-five years' rule to improve conditions at Eton. Dr. Arnold set himself to improve the general tone at Rugby, and his success was imitated at other schools. His ideals are best summed up in his own words: 'What we must look for is first, religious and moral principle; secondly, gentlemanly conduct; thirdly, intellectual ability.' To gain his ends, Arnold greatly increased the powers wielded by the school prefects. He also laid great stress on the services in Rugby Chapel.

We may conclude this section by considering three aspects

<sup>1</sup> 'May I not do what I wish with mine own?' said the Victorian paterfamilias, ruling his family with a rod of iron. 'May I not do what I will with mine own?' said the industrialist in the factory.

<sup>2</sup> The humanitarian movement and the movement for the emancipation of women, amongst others, no doubt have made people nowadays more conscious of evils which were regarded as part of the order of things in the Victorian age. (Wife-beating declined greatly in the nineteenth century. According to a French philosopher, 'Man is the only animal who drinks when he is not thirsty and who beats his wife!')



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Hughes (an old Rugbeian and author of *Tom Brown's School days*). Kingsley and Maurice, both clergymen, started clubs for working men and boys in London—a great work which has borne good fruit. Kingsley, the author of *Westward Ho!* and *The Water Babies*, also wrote several novels (e.g. *Alton Locke*) in order to impress his countrymen with the evils of industrialism, which, he thought, could only be cured by practical Christianity.

The conflict with science

The strongholds of the Evangelical faith were rudely shaken by the conflict, in the middle of the century, between the Church and the leaders of science. Hitherto, science had not come into conflict with religion; the Victorians accepted the material benefits of 'Progress' with enthusiasm. Now, however, it appeared that scientific thought was leading men to doubt the literal truth of the Bible—one of the main tenets of Evangelicals. The controversy arose over the problem of Evolution. Scientists had for long observed the facts of the variation of species and had tried to account for them. Lamarck (died 1829), for instance, had put forth a theory to account for variation: he suggested that the length of the giraffe's neck was due to that animal's having lived for long ages on the foliage of high trees—and similarly with other special characteristics in other animals. It was also well known that the process of Creation was both long and complex; and the science of geology threw some light on this process. Sir Charles Lyell in his *Principles of Geology* (1830) proved, from the record of the rocks, that the fossils of certain animals were millions of years old.

Darwin  
*Origin of Species*  
1859

These theories created a certain interest, but none compared with the stir when Charles Darwin published his *Origin of Species* (1859). Darwin began by accepting the geological record, proving the immense age of animal species, and also the observed facts (many of his own careful observation) about the differentiation of species. He then attempted to account for this differentiation by the ingenious theory of Natural Selection, by which, he said, certain species evolved by the Survival of the Fittest. To take the example of the giraffe once more, Darwin argued that the giraffe had survived in the struggle for existence *because* its ancestors had lived in a barren land where

only the animals with the longest necks had been able to get any food. In other words, the accident of one animal having developed a long neck caused that animal to survive; it therefore tended to transmit this peculiar characteristic to its descendants, who, otherwise, would perish. This is, in brief, the theory of Natural Selection.

The effect of the *Origin of Species* on the public mind was profound. It was at once seen that the Darwinian theory was at variance with the literal terms of the story of the Creation as given in the Book of Genesis. The churches—though not their ablest leaders—attacked Darwin and his theory, and indeed all evolution theories, root and branch. This quite unnecessary quarrel,<sup>1</sup> in which Darwin himself took no part, was carried on with extreme virulence; men like Huxley went far in defending the scientific position. Darwin himself published his *Descent of Man* in 1871, in which he suggested that men and the apes were both descended from some parent stock; this caused more derision and ill feeling. 'Is man an ape or an angel?' remarked Disraeli; 'I am on the side of the angels.'

But the seed was sown; after Darwin the Evangelical position was never quite the same again. The doubts of the Victorian thinkers are best seen in Tennyson, the most typical of their poets, a man whose great lyric gifts were second to none in that generation. But instead of writing lyrical poetry, Tennyson, in later life, turned philosopher, and tried to interpret the Victorian mind to itself. He was, perhaps, more widely read, and listened to with more reverence than any other poet of modern times. His doubts and difficulties were best expressed in the pathetic stanzas of *In Memoriam*,<sup>2</sup> written in sorrow at the death of his friend, Arthur Hallam:

<sup>1</sup> It may be well here to say that Darwin's own theory of *Natural Selection* is now regarded as non-proven. On the other hand the general truth of the statement that men and animals have evolved from some older form of life is generally admitted. *Evolution*, in fact, is one of the accepted ideas of our time, and it is now seen that this idea does not conflict with the idea of a Creator.

<sup>2</sup> The opening stanza of *In Memoriam* begins 'Strong Son of God, Immortal Love'.

Tennyson  
1809-92

of Victorian religion—the Anglo-Catholic movement, the Christian Socialist experiment, and the controversy over the theory of Evolution.

The Anglo-Catholic (or Oxford) Movement was begun in the thirties by certain clergymen, chiefly Oxford men, of whom the best known were E. B. Pusey, John Henry Newman, and John Keble. Newman and Keble wrote a series of *Tracts for the Times* with the object of arousing the clergy of the Church of England in defence of their order. The clergy, according to Newman, would only regain and deserve the respect of the laity if they remembered that their Church was part of the Catholic Church, and if they returned, in spirit and in practice, to Catholic doctrines and ritual. The Tractarians<sup>1</sup> also disliked the connexion between the Church of England and the State. They feared that the State would one day use its power to weaken the Church, e.g. suppress the bishoprics and use the money thus saved for secular purposes. The movement aroused the strongest passions, not only at the time of its introduction, but for fifty years afterwards. It displeased the queen, who induced Disraeli to support (1874) a Public Worship Regulation Bill, introduced by the Archbishop of Canterbury. This Bill was designed to put down Ritualism; it did not have very much effect. Newman himself left the Church of England in 1845, and joined the Church of Rome—an act which called forth nation-wide excitement. Father Newman was later honoured by the Church he had joined, and was made a Cardinal. His wonderful personal charm, his sterling character, and his saintly life, mark him out as one of the greatest of the Victorians. He was also an admirable writer of English prose; his *Apologia Pro Vita Sua* (1864), in which he explained the reasons for his conversion to Rome in a reply to Charles Kingsley, is a masterpiece of its kind. Cardinal Newman died in 1890.

Anglo-Catholicism was, in a sense, a protest against the narrowness of Evangelicalism; Christian Socialism stressed the practical rather than the dogmatic side of Christianity. Its leaders were Charles Kingsley, F. D. Maurice, and Thomas

<sup>1</sup> The Anglo-Catholics were also known as Oxford Reformers, Puseyites, Ritualists, and—from the *Tracts*—Tractarians.

The Anglo-Catholics

Newman

The Christian Socialists

Many of the great Victorian writers were concerned with criticizing the time in which they lived. In particular, many of them felt deeply about the social problems of the day, and were offended at the self-satisfied air of the more prosperous Victorians. We shall chiefly consider here this aspect of their work.

In poetry Tennyson was for long the most popular writer, Poets though in *Maud* (1855) he gave vent to a pessimism which Tennyson did not suit his public, while the sincerity of his *In Memoriam* (p. 909) incurred the wrath of *The Times*. He made amends by the sentimental *Enoch Arden* (1864) and the deservedly popular *Idylls of the King*. His contemporary, Robert Browning Browning (1812-89), was remarkable for his vast learning, astonishing vocabulary, and great poetic skill, which, however, was too often marred by obscurity of expression. Matthew Arnold, a Arnold disciple of Wordsworth, wrote *Sohrab and Rustum*, *Balder Dead*, and the beautiful *Thyrsis* and *The Scholar Gypsy*. In Swinburne (1837-1909) we hear the note of revolt against Swinburne Victorianism which was to become louder in the next century. Swinburne's love poems (e.g. *Poems and Ballads*, 1866) were thought too audacious; but it was only that he was bold and outspoken where Tennyson was decorous and reticent.

Novels, which form so large a portion of modern reading, Novels were not so numerous during most of the Victorian period. In 1870 the largest group of books was that on religious subjects; novels came fifth on the list, below children's books, history, and biography. But by 1887 the novel headed the list, though religious works still came second.

The novels of Charles Dickens cover the early Victorian Dickens period, beginning with *Pickwick*, which first appeared in 1812-70 fortnightly parts in 1836. *David Copperfield* (1850) was practically an autobiography; while the long succeeding list gave their author an enduring fame. His characters show us, in slightly caricatured form, the English scene as Dickens knew and loved it. His great portrait gallery, which includes Mrs. Gamp, Mr. Pickwick, Mr. Micawber, Mr. Pecksniff, Mr. Chadband, and Mr. Dick, can only be compared with the portraits in Chaucer's *Tales*. Many of Dickens's novels are passionate pleas for sympathy with the unfortunate men and women who inhabited the underworld of London which he knew so well.

I falter where I firmly trod,  
 And falling with my weight of cares  
 Upon the world's great altar-stairs  
 That slope through darkness up to God,  
 I stretch lame hands of faith, and grope,  
 And gather dust and chaff, and call  
 To what I feel is Lord of all,  
 And faintly trust the larger hope.

#### 4. *The Critics of the Age*

**The Press** The Victorian Age in English literature was one of the most remarkable in our history. It was an age of great readers, as we can tell by the mass of printed material—most of it cast in a far more serious vein than modern literature—which appeared in newspaper, magazine, and book form. The London and provincial press<sup>1</sup> was a very different affair from twentieth-century journalism; there were no headlines and no illustrations. The news was carefully reported, and not edited so as to produce startling effects. Political speeches, reported at full length, occupied many columns. On even more serious lines were the great monthly and quarterly reviews, the best of which were **The Reviews** the *Edinburgh Review*, the *Fortnightly Review* (edited by John Morley from 1867 to 1882), and the *Quarterly*. The *Fortnightly* included among its contributors nearly all the leaders of English thought—philosophers like Herbert Spencer, Walter Bagehot, and J. S. Mill, scientists like Huxley, historians like Freeman and James Gairdner, and poets like D. G. Rossetti. The articles these men wrote were not intended for light reading; they were real contributions to serious thought.

<sup>1</sup> The chief London papers were: *The Times* (printed by steam from 1814), *Daily Telegraph*, *Standard*, *Daily Chronicle*, *Morning Post*, and *Daily News* (founded by Dickens in 1846). *The Times*, under the able editorship of Barnes (died 1841) and Delane (died 1879), held an outstanding position. After the newspaper tax was repealed (1855) an important series of penny morning papers, sober and dignified, sprang into significance. This tradition of British journalism survived during the whole period under review (1837–87). The power of the press during this period was based on the first Reform Bill, and the press developed a dominantly middle-class atmosphere. The Reform Bills of 1867 and 1884 produced an uneducated electorate and a press to cater for it.

schools. In his *Culture and Anarchy*, he chastises the upper and middle classes of England, calling them Barbarians and Philistines. Matthew Arnold, both in his daily work and in his writings, strove to save England through education, through Culture, from the Anarchy which he feared would result from materialism. Like Carlyle he distrusted an age which put its faith in a progress which was material, indifferent to art and letters. And he doubted the power of Evangelical Religion, which he regarded as narrow and cramping to the mind, to save the soul of England.

John Ruskin (1819-1900) spent the first half of a long life <sup>Ruskin</sup> in the service of art and architecture, to teach the 'Philistines' to appreciate beauty and good craftsmanship. His voluminous writings included books, pamphlets, articles, on a thousand aspects of English and Italian painting. His hero was Turner (1775-1851), whose work he extolled in his first book, *Modern Painters*, and whom he regarded as one of the greatest of English painters. When Ruskin was about forty, he turned to social reform. The effect of Industrialism on his sensitive mind is best described in his own words: 'I simply cannot paint, nor read, nor look at minerals, nor do anything else that I like, because of the misery that I know of which no imagination can interpret too bitterly.'<sup>1</sup> Ruskin spent a large fortune in personal efforts to help working people; his tragedy lay in the fact that the successful Victorian business world preferred profit-making to the dignity of the human life. At last his mind gave way under the strain. In the end he retired, like Wordsworth, to his beloved Lake District, and he died there in 1900.

Among the things which Ruskin most detested was the ugliness of England in the industrial age. Victorian building, <sup>The Victorian builder</sup> which was responsible for a large proportion of the mean streets of our towns—not to mention the tasteless villas of the older suburbs—was a sorry affair. Yet the Victorians were pleased with it. They were pleased because they revelled in the new power which the Industrial Revolution had given them: cheap bricks, cheap slates, cheap cement, cheap glass—all could be manufactured at an amazing speed and transported anywhere

<sup>1</sup> Ruskin, *Fors Clavigera*.

and everywhere by rail. The result was twofold. First, the special characteristics of local building were ignored, and red brick and blue slate dotted about everywhere in neighbourhoods quite unsuited to these materials; secondly, the appalling taste of the average builder led to the erection of various monstrosities in stone and brick which remain to offend our eyes. A similar infection spread from building to furniture. Here again, the ready access of cheap machine-made materials led to an overflowing. The lack of taste which distinguished the average Victorian building<sup>1</sup> was even more manifest inside the house; the Victorian drawing-room was over-decorated and over-furnished.

**William Morris** The life of William Morris (1834-96), who shared Ruskin's ideas, was a standing protest against Victorian ugliness. His original firm of seven partners (which included, besides Morris himself, the painters Burne-Jones and Rossetti) began to manufacture wall-paper and furniture from artistic designs. After Morris became sole proprietor (1875), he made himself an expert in dyeing and weaving, and his beautiful fabrics made a great impression on the more enlightened members of the public. His famous advice: 'Have nothing in your house except what you know to be useful or believe to be beautiful' was then badly needed; it is still needed to-day.

**Women's dress** The influence of Morris and Burne-Jones extended even to women's clothes. The cumbrous crinoline of the 'sixties, succeeded by the queer 'bustle' of the 'seventies and 'eighties was accompanied by various unhygienic contrivances for producing a 'wasp waist'. The Burne-Jones and Morris dresses were designed to achieve a more artistic and less physically damaging effect. The influence of the now popular pastime of cycling tended in the same direction, since it necessitated a greater freedom of costume than was possible with long dresses trailing on the ground and gathering up germs and dust.

<sup>1</sup> But Victorian building and Victorian furniture, for all their ugliness at least had the virtue of solidity. Many modern bungalows are not only unsightly but insecure.



Other novelists Other Victorian novelists were Thackeray, George Eliot, George Meredith, and the Brontë sisters. George Eliot's books (e.g. *Scenes of Clerical Life*, *The Mill on the Floss*) portray rural and clerical society, as the author knew it in Warwickshire: Anthony Trollope also described the life of provincial England. The Brontë sisters knew and wrote of a harsher world than this: their wild Yorkshire home is unforgettably described in Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights*, and in some passages of *Jane Eyre*. Almost as important from the historical point of view were Mrs. Gaskell, whose *North and South* (1855) stressed the contrast between industrial and rural England, Disraeli and Benjamin Disraeli, afterwards Prime Minister, who spoke in *Sybil*, of the 'two nations', rich and poor, into which England was divided. In this book he contrasts the pomp and luxury of 'Mowbray Castle' with the utter wretchedness of the weaver and his starving family, ground under the heel of the mill owners, to whom the author gives the opprobrious names of Shuffle and Screw.

The three greatest prose critics of the Victorian age were Carlyle Thomas Carlyle (1795-1881), Matthew Arnold (1822-88), and John Ruskin (1819-1900). Carlyle, the harsh-tongued Scottish prophet, son of a Scottish mason, lived most of his life in London, where he surveyed a world he despised. He believed that spiritual values are everything, material progress nothing. Hence his contempt for the boasted triumphs of the scientific and industrial age in which he lived. Incidentally he pointed out that these triumphs were by no means satisfactory to the majority of the British people, who still lived on the borderline of poverty.

'To whom, then, is this wealth of England wealth? Who is it that it blesses; makes happier, wiser, beautifuller, in any way better? . . . As yet no one. . . . In the midst of plethoric plenty, the people perish; with gold walls, and full barns, no man feels himself safe or satisfied. . . . Fatal paralysis spreading inwards, from the extremities, in St. Ives workhouses, in Stockport cellars, through all limbs, as if towards the heart itself. Have we actually got enchanted then; accursed by some god?'

Matthew Arnold Matthew Arnold, son of Dr. Arnold of Rugby, was a distinguished poet and critic and for many years an inspector of

of 86 over the Conservatives alone, without reckoning the Irish vote. The number of Irish M.P.s was 103, of whom exactly 86 were followers of Parnell. This meant that Parnell held the balance between the two English parties and that, if he chose, he could make parliamentary government impossible. There was little doubt that he would so choose. When, therefore, Gladstone at the age of seventy-seven became Prime Minister for the third time—for Salisbury resigned soon after the new Parliament met—it was with the intention of carrying Home Rule that he took office.

Defeat of  
Home Rule  
1886

But he had reckoned without his own party; above all, he had reckoned without Chamberlain. Gladstone's First Home Rule Bill (1886) split the Liberal Party. Not only were Lord Hartington and many of the Whigs opposed to it; John Bright vetoed it, and Chamberlain voted against it. All these men considered it too dangerous to allow Ireland to govern herself, particularly if the Dublin Parliament<sup>1</sup> was to be allowed to pass laws which might prove injurious to England. So, after stormy debates, the Home Rule Bill was thrown out by a majority of 30 (343 to 313). Ninety-three Liberals voted against the Government. The faithful Gladstonians cheered their veteran leader in the hour of his defeat, while wild cries of 'Traitor! Judas!', directed at Chamberlain, arose from the Irish benches (June 1886).

Gladstone refused to admit defeat until he had tested the opinion of the country. But another general election (1886) showed that the country was against him; the Gladstonian Liberals (with the Irish) were in a minority of 118 in the new Parliament. The majority was formed of Conservatives and Liberal Unionists, as those Liberals who were in favour of maintaining the Union of England and Ireland were called.

<sup>1</sup> The Home Rule Bill of 1886 made the following proposals: (1) To set up two Orders in an Irish Parliament, the First Order to consist of 28 Irish peers and 75 elected members, the Second Order of 204 elected members. (2) There was to be an Irish executive responsible to this Parliament. (3) The 103 Irish members to be excluded from the British Parliament at Westminster. (4) Ireland to contribute  $\frac{1}{15}$ th towards the total cost of Imperial expenditure. (5) Army and Navy, foreign affairs, customs and excise, coinage, and some other matters put outside the province of the Irish Legislature.

Lord Salisbury held office for six years (1886-92), supported by the Liberal Unionists. During that time, he began to apply his remedy for Irish troubles—'twenty years of resolute government'. Another Crimes Act (1887) was firmly enforced by the Premier's nephew, Arthur Balfour, who became Chief Secretary, and who developed unsuspected qualities. Hitherto Balfour had been regarded as a mere social butterfly, or at best as a dabbler in literature; now he proved to be a resolute and fearless Chief Secretary.

Salisbury's  
Second  
Ministry  
1886-92

At the end of six years, the Gladstonians were once more returned to the House of Commons with a majority of 40, including the Irish vote. The indefatigable old man, Premier for the fourth time at the age of eighty-three, introduced a Second Home Rule Bill (1893). This Bill, which Gladstone fought for with all his old fire, and defended with his accustomed skill, passed the House of Commons. But, when it was thrown out by the Lords, Gladstone gave up the struggle.<sup>1</sup> After sixty-three years in the House of Commons, he retired from the Premiership and from Parliament. He died four years later. His place as Liberal Premier was taken by Lord Rosebery, a man of great promise who proved a failure as Prime Minister. In this ministry, Sir William Harcourt, Chancellor of the Exchequer, introduced his Death Duties, fairly heavy taxes payable by heirs of estates—afterwards greatly increased by Mr. Lloyd George. The Rosebery Government lasted a year; when it fell the Conservatives resumed office for another ten years (1895-1905).

Gladstone's  
Fourth  
Ministry  
1892-4

Second  
Home Rule  
Bill, 1893

Rosebery  
Ministry  
1894-5

Very important changes took place in local government during this period. The Local Government Act (1888), passed by the Salisbury Ministry, set up elected County Councils which were given wide powers,<sup>2</sup> in place of the ancient administration of counties by the Justices of the Peace sitting at Quarter Sessions. London was made a separate county; the

Local  
Government

<sup>1</sup> Gladstone himself was prepared to go to the country again, and fight the House of Lords if he were returned again. But his followers persuaded him that this would be useless.

<sup>2</sup> County Councils now look after bridges and roads (except the Trunk Roads taken over by the Ministry of Transport); public health and housing; education (Acts of 1902, 1918, and 1936); and maintenance of the poor (Poor Law Act, 1929).

larger boroughs (those over 50,000 population) were separated from the county jurisdiction and given their own local self-government as County Boroughs. The Liberals in 1894 followed this Act up by another setting up Parish Councils, Urban District and Rural District Councils, all based on direct popular election.

## 2. *Imperialism*

Lord Salisbury 1886-92 and 1895-1902 Lord Salisbury's Second and Third Ministries (1886-92 and 1895-1902) cover a period somewhat barren in domestic affairs. But they form a very important period in the history of the British Empire, corresponding to a time of vital change in the world's development. Salisbury's Second Ministry included Conservatives only; his Third was a Coalition of Conservatives and Liberal Unionists, of whom the most important was Joseph Chamberlain. This remarkable man, who had once led the Radical onslaught on wealth and privilege, now took office under the very man whom he had singled out for attack. The change in Chamberlain's position was due not so much to a waning enthusiasm for Radical reform as to a growing enthusiasm for the Imperial idea. He had broken with Gladstone on a question of the unity of the Empire—for so he regarded Irish Home Rule; in his later years he became the apostle of British Imperialism. In 1895 he took office as Colonial Secretary.

Chamberlain Colonial Secretary 1895-1903 Salisbury and Chamberlain were in power at a time when an amazing expansion of European influence took place throughout the world. The last quarter of the nineteenth century saw the creation of the German and French colonial empires, a vast expansion of the British Empire, the opening up of Africa, and the penetration of Eastern Asia by European influence. This Europeanization of the world was seldom accompanied by a careful regard for the welfare of the native races; though in time thoughtful men came to see that the responsibility of ruling millions of coloured people was a serious one. Rudyard Kipling, the poet of Imperialism in England, sounded a warning note, and spoke of the 'white man's burden' of responsibility. But it was rather with the idea of exploiting com-

An age of Imperialism

mercial advantages that the first scramble for overseas empire began.<sup>1</sup>

The partition of Africa was the most striking and the most rapid of this European expansion overseas. Up to quite recent times, Africa had remained the Dark Continent, unknown and unexplored. There have been three periods in the development of Africa. First the Mediterranean coastline has been known from the earliest times, and may be regarded as almost part of Europe. The civilizations of Carthage and Egypt were centred there, and all North Africa was part of the Roman Empire and of the Mohammedan Empire which took its place in later times. From the sixteenth to the nineteenth century North Africa was part of the Turkish Empire, the break-up of which led to the British occupation of Egypt, and other acquisitions by France and Italy.<sup>2</sup> The second stage in African development began in the fifteenth century with the Portuguese explorations, culminating in the discovery of the Cape route to India. This was followed by the planting of a few coastal settlements, chiefly in West Africa for the purposes of the slave trade, by the Portuguese, French, Dutch, and British.

The third stage began with the great explorers of Central Africa (1769-1871), and culminated in the second half of the nineteenth century, with the complete opening up of the interior of Africa. Bruce reached Abyssinia in 1769 and discovered the source of the Blue Nile. Mungo Park—a friend of Sir Walter Scott—explored the course of the Niger in 1794 and proceeded up the Gambia, attended only by a negro servant and a boy; in 1805 he made a second journey to the Niger and perished in a conflict with the natives. In 1858 Speke discovered the sources of the White Nile, and Burton reached Lake Tanganyika and discovered Lake Nyanza.

But David Livingstone (1813-73) was the greatest hero of African exploration. He began life as a mill-hand in a Clydes-

The  
opening up  
of Africa

Living-  
stone

<sup>1</sup> The three greatest colonizing agents were: traders, missionaries, and government officials. The officials were generally the last on the scene, e.g. in New Zealand. But so rapid was the scramble for Africa that they sometimes appeared before either the trader or the missionary.

<sup>2</sup> The conquest of Algiers by France was by far the earliest. The dates are: Algiers (France) 1830; Tunis (France) 1881; Egypt (Britain) 1882; Tripoli (Italy) 1911; Morocco (France and Spain) 1912 onwards.

dale village. The mill hours were from 6 a.m. to 8 p.m. but in his spare time Livingstone studied Latin grammar and re- science. He went to Glasgow University, and then became missionary; it was as a missionary that he went to Sou Africa (1841). For twenty years he worked among the natives, his powers of endurance were wonderful and his courage beyon all praise. Livingstone set his face against the white man's cruelty towards the natives—which he first encountered in the Boer settlements—and especially against slavery. He found that 19,000 blacks were sold as slaves by the Arabs at Zanzibar every year; the Portuguese record was not much better. Livingstone, during twenty years of missionary journeys, explored the interior of Africa from Bechuanaland to the Upper Congo. He traced the Zambesi to its mouth, and discovered Lake Nyassa. He died in Central Africa, after refusing to return home with H. M. Stanley, the explorer, who had come out to Africa to find him.

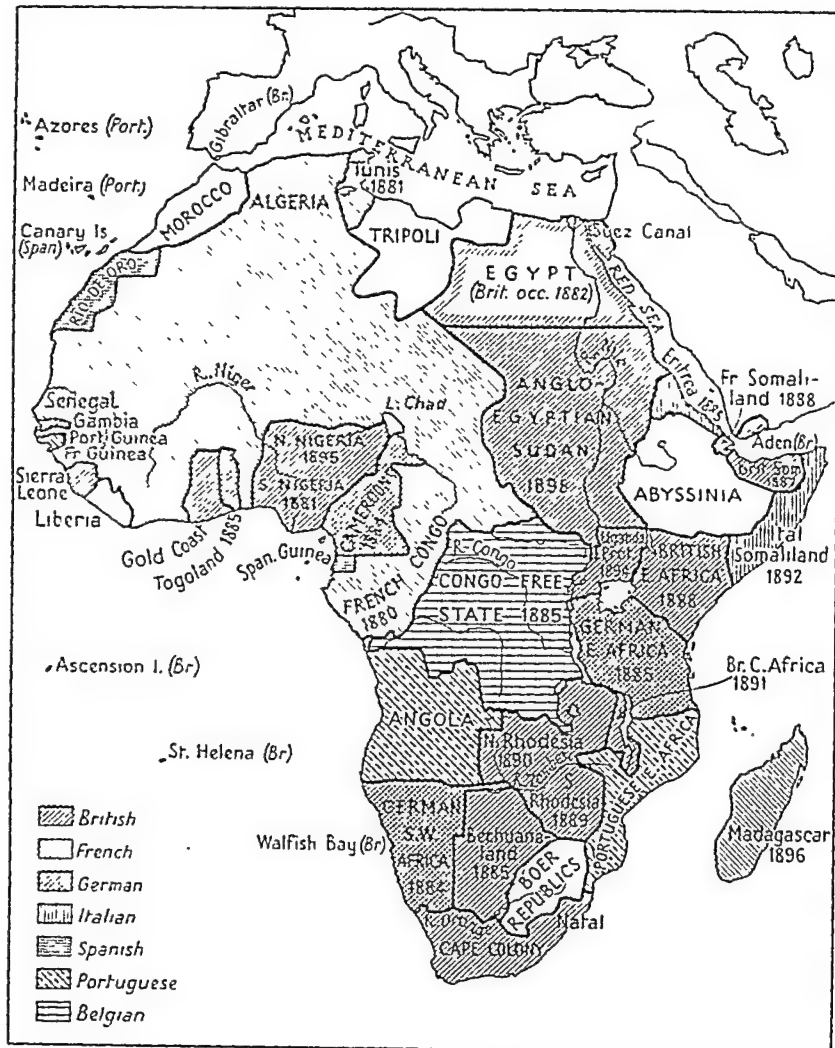
The Parti-  
tion of  
Africa

The European states concerned in the partition of Africa were six in number: Britain, Germany, France, Italy, Portugal, and Belgium. The Portuguese were already established; their colonies, though ill defined in area, had had a continuous existence since the days of Vasco da Gama. The first new comers were the Belgians. King Leopold II of Belgium, an enterprising and unscrupulous man, formed an international company to develop the Congo basin, but it soon became dominantly Belgian. The Congo Free State (1879) was Leopold's creation; it began well, but later grave abuses broke out, and the natives of some districts were very cruelly treated. The sovereignty was afterwards transferred to the Belgian nation. But the French were soon on the scene (in French Congo) and so were the Portuguese. Bismarck, meanwhile, had authorized the beginnings of a German overseas empire, as a consequence of which German South-West Africa, Togoland, and the Cameroons were seized in 1884. A conference at Berlin in the same year settled, without war, the outstanding differences between the states so far concerned in Africa. Next year the Germans seized what is now Tanganyika (German East Africa) and the Sultan of Zanzibar, an action approved by Britain in 1886.

Conference  
of Berlin  
1884

British  
colonies

All this had happened while the Gladstone Government was



### 13. AFRICA: 1900





in power. Gladstone was averse from England's taking any part in the 'scramble for Africa', though, as we have seen, circumstances had forced him to occupy Egypt. Lord Salisbury's views were different. During his two long ministries (1886-92 and 1895-1902) he played an active part in the partition of Africa. It was not too late to take part—indeed it was not too late to take the lion's share! Two methods were employed. Chartered Companies, on the lines of the old sixteenth-century companies, were encouraged to develop British colonies; and the Government negotiated treaties with foreign powers in order to consolidate British gains. The British East Africa Company developed what is now Kenya (1885-90).<sup>British East Africa: 1885-90</sup> Soon afterwards Salisbury concluded a treaty with Germany by which two British colonies, British East Africa and the Uganda Protectorate, were defined to the north of German East Africa (map) (1890).

In South Africa, enormous strides were made in a very few years, beginning with the annexation of the native state of Bechuanaland<sup>1</sup> (1885). In 1888 the British concluded a treaty with Lobengula, King of the Matabeles, establishing a protectorate over his country. This did not satisfy Cecil Rhodes, who (1889) obtained the grant of a charter to a British South Africa Company, which colonized the land that now bears its founder's name—Rhodesia. The guiding hand in the development of British South Africa was that of Rhodes.<sup>2</sup> This<sup>Cecil Rhodes</sup>

<sup>1</sup> One of its noblest Kaffir chiefs was Khama (1835-1923), who became a Christian and conducted himself as one. Writing once to Queen Victoria he said: 'There are three things which distress me very much: wars, selling people and drink.' In his old age he was photographed with a grandchild of Gladstone—'and that', wrote Gladstone's son, 'is my last impression of Khama, a very tall, very dark, South African chief, holding in his arms—with the greatest tenderness—the very small, very fair, English child'.

<sup>2</sup> Cecil John Rhodes. Born at Bishop's Stortford (1853). Went to South Africa (1874), but returned to Oxford (Oriel College) to complete his education. Spent his Long Vacations in South Africa. Returned and made his fortune in the diamond mines. Founded British South Africa Co. (1889); became Prime Minister of Cape Colony (1890). Resigned after the Jameson Raid (q.v.) 1896. Died 1902. Endowed the Rhodes Scholarships at Oxford for students from the Empire and foreign countries.

XLII

SALISBURY AND CHAMBERLAIN

(1885-1905)

I. *The Home Rule Split*

WHEN Gladstone resigned in the summer of 1885, Lord Salisbury took office for a few months, pending a general election. That election (Nov.-Dec. 1885) was the first to be held under the extended franchise created by the Third Reform Bill. Chamberlain, now no longer in office, felt himself free to advocate a full democratic programme,<sup>1</sup> whether the Whig members of the late Cabinet approved of it or not. This 'unauthorized programme', as it was called, frightened the Whigs as much as the Tories. Britain was a democracy at last, and as far as most men could see—which as it turned out was not very far—an era of Radical reform was about to begin. Chamberlain, it was assumed, would shortly succeed the aged Gladstone as Premier, and then the Radical programme would be carried out. That programme included free primary education, financial reform (which meant taxing unearned incomes to provide the money for popular reforms, such as housing), manhood suffrage, and payment of members of Parliament. In addition, Chamberlain advocated a large measure of land reform, to give the labourer some real share in the ownership of the soil. This last reform has never yet been carried out; the others had to wait for twenty years. Why were these reforms so long postponed instead of being carried out at once? The answer lies partly in the unexpected behaviour of Gladstone, partly in the action of Chamberlain himself.

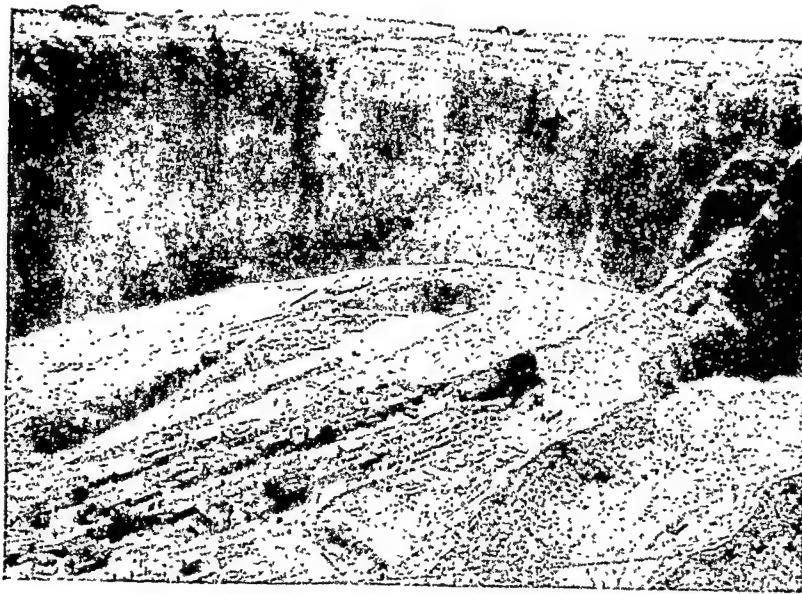
During the election, Gladstone was gradually making up his mind to introduce a Bill granting Home Rule to Ireland. The results of the election hastened his decision. He had a majority

<sup>1</sup> Chamberlain in his 'Unauthorized Programme', like Gladstone in his Midlothian Campaign, appealed to the wider public outside Parliament itself. These direct appeals to the people show the increasing power of public opinion and the pressure it exerted on Governments.

Salisbury's  
First  
Ministry  
June 1885-  
Jan. 1886

Chamber-  
lain's 'Un-  
authorized  
Programme

Gladstone's  
Third  
Ministry  
Feb.-July  
1886



#### THE OPENING UP OF AFRICA

*Above*, Livingstone being received by an African chief in 1854, in what is now Northern Rhodesia. *Below*, the gigantic crater of a diamond mine near Pretoria.

remarkable man, who had made his fortune in the Kimberley Diamond Mines, was an enthusiast for the Imperial idea. He had an unusual ability in practical affairs, combined with a faith in the future which was almost that of a prophet. He worked with all his energy to unite South Africa, British, Dutch, and native, under the British flag. His aim was high, but his methods were dangerous. It was not long before there was a revolt of the Matabeles, followed by war; Bulawayo was taken and the country conquered. About the same time a treaty with Portugal defined the limits of the old Portuguese and the new British colonies (map).

French  
ambitions

The ambitions of France in Africa were wider than those of Germany. Starting from Algeria in the north and Senegal in the west, the rulers of the Third Republic hoped to make all North Africa into a vast French province. They were largely successful; they joined up their northern and western colonies, and seized positions on the Upper Niger and on Lake Chad. The British West African colonies, like Gambia and Sierra Leone, soon became isolated outposts in a great French preserve. Another treaty (1890) dealt with this question too, and Britain emerged with the vast and valuable colony of Nigeria—which had been developed by the Royal Niger Company.

Nigeria

Somaliland

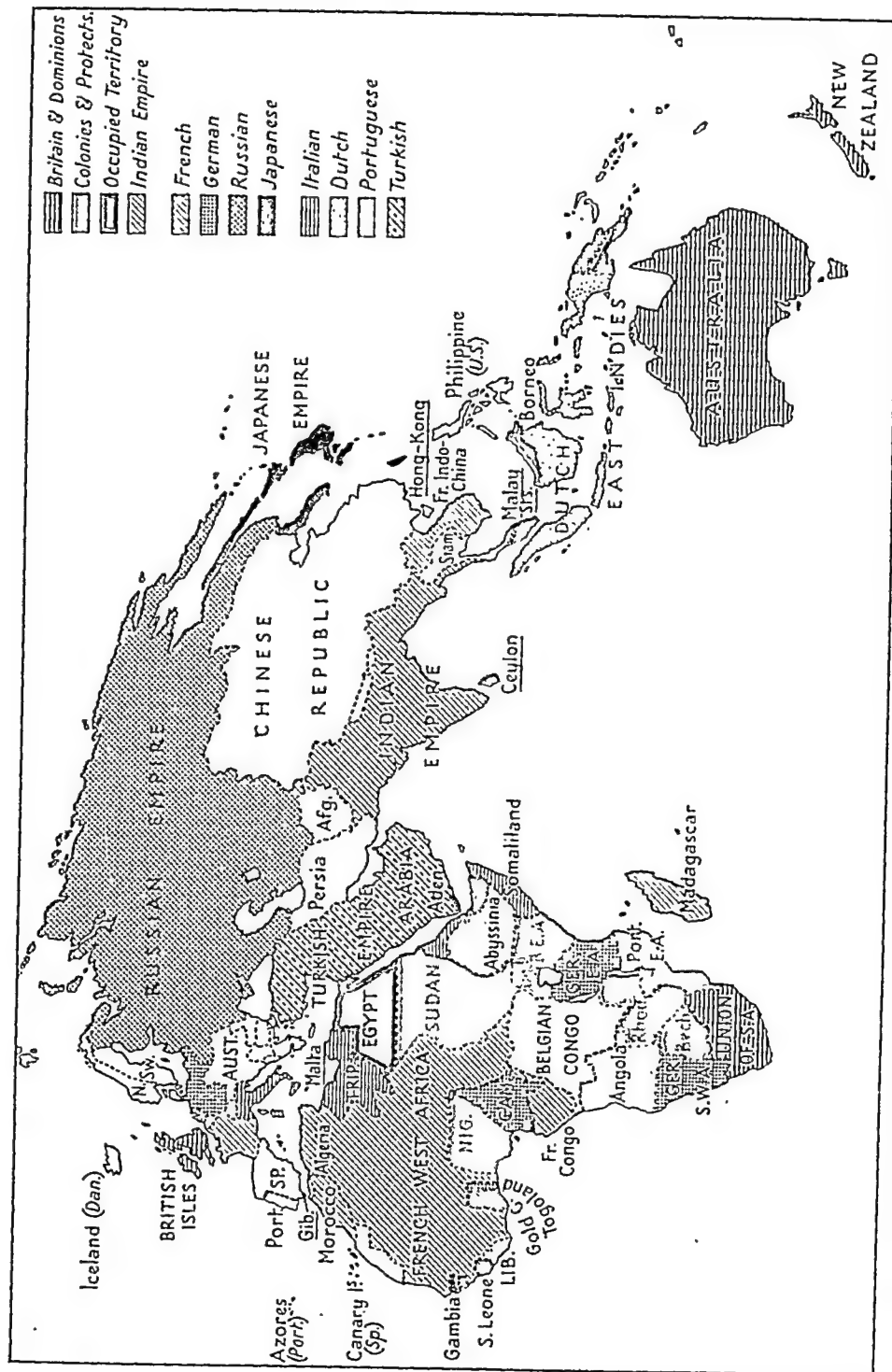
Next year another treaty, this time with Italy (1891), partitioned Somaliland between Britain and Italy. A few years later the Italians, advancing from Eritrea, on the Red Sea, attempted to push into Abyssinia. But the Ethiopians inflicted a crushing defeat on their invaders at Adowa (1896); this was the only set-back the Europeans received at the hands of the native races during the period of conquest and partition. About this time, Britain, having put the Egyptian state on its feet, felt strong enough to undertake the conquest of the Sudan.

Conquest  
of the  
Sudan  
1896-8

A campaign conducted—with a large use of machine-guns—by Sir Herbert Kitchener<sup>1</sup> resulted in the crushing victory of Omdurman (1898). A French expedition, under Lieutenant

<sup>1</sup> A famous American orator has said of Kitchener: 'What's remarkable about Kitchener is that wherever he has fought he has been victorious. That is rare among generals. But where he has conquered there has followed lasting peace. That is almost unknown among conquerors.'





I4. EUROPEAN POSSESSIONS IN ASIA, AFRICA, AND AUSTRALASIA: 1914

our sea-power, never challenged since Trafalgar. Salisbury decided to strengthen our naval bulwark, and his Naval Defence Act (1889) laid down the principle that the British Navy must be superior to the navies of any two other Powers.

Naval  
Defence  
Act, 1889

The development of the Dominions during this period was quiet and steady. New provinces were added to the Dominion of Canada (e.g. Manitoba, 1870, Alberta, 1905) as the Middle West was opened up to the pioneer of the forest and the prairie. The completion of the Canadian Pacific Railway (1885) linked up old Canada with the new provinces of the West. In Australia, still chiefly dependent on the great wool-growing industry, five large towns sprang up—Melbourne, Sydney, Adelaide, Brisbane, and Perth—in which a very large proportion of the population lived. Meanwhile there was a movement afoot towards the federation of the five colonies (six with Tasmania) and, on 1 January 1901, the Commonwealth of Australia came into being. Both Australia and New Zealand adopted a programme of political and social reform<sup>1</sup> considerably in advance of that of Britain. New Zealand was given the rank of a Dominion in 1907. The last of the great Dominions—South Africa—to be formed (in 1910) was in a different category; her peoples had yet to pass through the ordeal of war.

Develop-  
ment of  
the Domin-  
ions

Common-  
wealth of  
Australia  
1901

### 3. *The Boer War*

The challenge to British Imperialism came from South Africa. The Transvaal Boers, as we have seen, had been granted their independence by Gladstone (1881), but they still disliked and suspected the British. There were now two new causes of friction. First, Cecil Rhodes, Premier of Cape Colony and chairman of the British South Africa Company, was pushing forward with the development of native territory, which prevented the extension of the Boer lands (see map, p. 929). Secondly, the discovery of gold in the Transvaal (1886) led to an entirely new situation. Englishmen went to Johannesburg in thousands to seek their fortunes in the mines; within ten years half the white male population in the Transvaal was British.

Kruger  
and the  
Uitlanders  
1886-99

<sup>1</sup> New Zealand was the first country to give votes to women; voting and military service are compulsory. Australia had the first Labour government, introduced Old Age Pensions before Britain, and (like New Zealand) early organized arbitration courts to prevent strikes.

Marchand, had crossed Central Africa from the Senegal to the Nile, and had, by a coincidence, reached Fashoda at exactly the same time, and raised the flag of the Republic. There was an awkward situation, but fortunately the two soldiers kept their heads. However, for a time, Britain and France stood on the brink of war. Eventually the French withdrew, and gave up the Sudan, which was made into a protectorate under Anglo-Egyptian government.

The Far  
East and  
the Pacific

In the Far East, similar European development was pushed forward. The French conquered Indo-China: the British completed the conquest of Burma (1886). A British protectorate was established over the states of the Malay Peninsula, where the native rulers are advised by the Governor of Singapore: other colonies were planted in Borneo. At the same time the designs of France and Germany in the Pacific alarmed Australia and New Zealand, who feared that some of the islands might be used as naval bases by a foreign Power. Consequently Britain took possession of over a hundred Pacific islands between 1886 and 1900. Similarly, the German seizure of part of New Guinea alarmed Queensland and led to the annexation of British New Guinea (1886). In China, too, European penetration was pushed on, and all the powers scrambled for 'leases'. The German seizure of Kiao-Chau (1897) in the Yellow Sea was followed by the Russian occupation of Port Arthur and the British lease of Wei-hai-Wei in the following year. The rising power of Japan across the water was jealously watched by the European powers, especially Russia.

Great Britain had done well in the colonial race. The British people, at the time of the queen's Jubilees, were in an imperialistic mood. The first Jubilee, in 1887, was made the occasion for the summoning of a Colonial Conference, the first of its kind, between British ministers and the statesmen of the Dominions. The Diamond Jubilee (1897) was even more gorgeous and was definitely staged as a pageant of Empire. The Empire, it was recognized, was the most powerful in the world, even though it was said to have been founded in a 'fit of absence of mind'. Also, it depended on the maintenance of



There is no doubt that the failure of the Raid, followed by Rhodes's resignation and the Kaiser's telegram, stiffened Kruger in his anti-British attitude. He began to believe that, in a contest between Britain and Boers in South Africa, the Boers would win. He began to arm heavily, buying Krupp's guns and machine-guns. His war expenditure rose from £61,000 in 1895 to £256,000 in 1897. Asked by the Premier of Natal what all these armaments were for, Kruger replied: 'Oh, Kaffirs, Kaffirs—and such-like objects!' Sir Alfred Milner, British High Commissioner for South Africa, made some attempts to reach a settlement with Kruger, but with no success. At the beginning of 1899 he warned Chamberlain that the situation was becoming unbearable. In September, the Government sent extra troops to South Africa. Kruger thereupon delivered an ultimatum, and war followed (1899). The Boers of the Orange Free State threw in their lot with their brethren of the Transvaal; but the Boers of Cape Colony remained loyal to Britain.

Kruger  
prepares  
for war

The Boer War (1899-1902) passed through three distinct phases—(i) Boer successes, up to February 1900; (ii) Lord Roberts's victories, up to September 1900; (iii) the rounding-up of the Boers, which lasted eighteen months, up to May 1902. The Boers began by invading Natal, and laying siege to Ladysmith, which place was defended by Sir George White. Sir Redvers Buller, commanding the British army in South Africa, attempted to relieve Ladysmith, but was defeated in three battles. The Boers also laid siege to Kimberley and Mafeking, just over their western border. An attempt to relieve Mafeking failed. The news of Buller's three defeats, and the fact that no headway was being made against the Boers in any quarter, caused a severe shock to British opinion. But the queen expressed the national determination when she remarked to Balfour: 'We are not interested in the possibilities of defeat; they do not exist.'

The Boer  
War, 1899-  
1902

Boer  
successes  
1899-1900

A large expeditionary force was now raised under Lord Roberts, with Kitchener as Chief of Staff. Canada and the Australian colonies sent contingents—an impressive sign of the strength of the Imperial tie, showing that this was rendered only stronger by Britain's granting self-government to her

Roberts  
(Feb.-Sept.  
1900)

But Paul Kruger, President of the Transvaal, was a lifelong opponent of Britain, and therefore of the Uitlanders (outlanders), as the new settlers were called. He not only denied the large British mining population all political rights; he also levied on them a special mines-tax, which almost paid the entire expenses of the Boer government. Kruger was a great Boer patriot. At ten years of age he had taken part in the Great Trek; he knew personally practically every burgher in his republic. He regarded himself as the Heaven-sent leader of a 'chosen people', and he inspired the Boers all through their struggle for independence.

South African affairs were never far from the centre of the picture during Salisbury's Third Ministry (1895-1902). First there was the crisis of the Jameson Raid. Rhodes at Capetown deeply sympathized with the grievances of the Uitlanders, and was determined, if he could, to help them. Chamberlain sympathized with Rhodes's feelings, though how far he was prepared to go is not known;<sup>1</sup> at any rate he was not responsible for what actually happened. Rhodes hatched a plot with the British in Johannesburg, who were to rise in revolt against the Boer Government, at the same moment that an armed force crossed the frontier in their aid. This force was put under command of a certain Dr. Jameson, who precipitated matters by crossing the frontier before the Uitlanders were ready (29 December 1895). The Raid was a complete failure; Jameson and his men were surrounded and captured. Rhodes had to resign the Cape premiership, and Chamberlain, who was not aware of the plot, had to defend himself in Parliament. At the same time, British opinion was inflamed by a telegram sent by the German Kaiser, William II, to Kruger: 'I sincerely congratulate you that, without appealing to the help of friendly Powers, you with your people, by your own energy against the armed hordes which as disturbers of the peace broke into your country, have succeeded in re-establishing peace, and maintaining the independence of your country against attack from without.'

<sup>1</sup> 'My case is [wrote Chamberlain] that while I knew all about the revolution, I knew nothing of anything so mad as Jameson's raid.' (Garvin, *Life of Chamberlain*.) What (it has been asked) does his 'knowing all about the revolution' mean? The mystery remains unexplained.

public, but he took steps to see that conditions in the camps were improved.

At length the Boer generals, Smuts, De Wet, and Botha, gave up the hopeless struggle and sued for peace. It was signed at Vereeniging (May 1902) and its principal condition



SOUTH AFRICA: 1890-1910

was the surrender of Boer independence. Britain granted three million pounds towards re-stocking the Boer farms—terms generous to a defeated enemy, but necessary if ex-enemies were to be turned into peaceful subjects. The British losses in the war were 5,774 killed and 22,800 wounded; in addition, 16,000 had died of disease, chiefly enteric fever.

The sequel belongs, chronologically, to the next chapter, but must be stated here. In 1906, Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, now Prime Minister, granted self-government to the two Boer colonies. This act of far-seeing statesmanship, though denounced by Balfour at the time, was the prelude to happier relations in South Africa. Three years later, an Act of the British Parliament united the four South African colonies—Cape Colony, Natal, Transvaal, and Orange River Colony—

The sequel  
1902-10

Union of South Africa 1910 into one Dominion, the Union of South Africa, which came into being in 1910. Thus, within eight years of the firing of the last shot on the veld, the basis of a great new State was laid by those who had so long been enemies. The first Prime Minister of the Union of South Africa was Louis Botha, a Boer general. 'You in England', said Botha, 'have given us the hand of friendship, and we have taken it and shall not let it go.' In 1914 Botha was a general in the British army; in 1919 General Smuts joined the British Imperial Cabinet and became one of the founders of the League of Nations.

#### 4. *The Passing of the Victorian Age*

Death of Queen Victoria 1901 'There are no words to express the general grief, the universal sense of national and personal bereavement, awakened by this event which it is our melancholy duty to chronicle to-day (23 January 1901). These words, from *The Times*' leading article on the death of Queen Victoria, were no mere perfunctory tribute; they were an expression of sincere feeling. Every one in Britain felt that a great epoch had ended with the queen's life, and felt, too, a sense of grief not unmingled with awe at the change. Queen Victoria was a strong-minded woman who, in spite of the limitations imposed on the sovereign by the British Constitution, exerted a considerable influence on public affairs. In the more intimate circle of the Court her will was absolute; indeed, few sovereigns have been such autocrats in private life. And in politics the queen was never negligible even Gladstone, at the height of his power, deferred, at least on minor points, to her wishes, and her formidable displeasure was a thing no man could disregard. England in 1900, as in 1600, was ruled by a Cecil<sup>1</sup> and the queen; politically the queen and the minister had changed places, but the royal temper was much the same under Victoria as under Elizabeth.

Edward VII 1901-10 Victoria's son, Edward VII (1901-10), was a genial, kindly man, and much more in the public eye than the late queen. His coronation (1902) was a resplendent affair, and he delighted

<sup>1</sup> Lord Salisbury was descended from William Cecil, Elizabeth's minister, whose son Robert Cecil, minister to Elizabeth and James I, was the first Lord Salisbury.

in his public appearances and in his frequent journeys to foreign capitals. Altogether the new monarch was a great contrast to the dim, shrouded figure at Osborne House.

Lord Salisbury retired from politics the next year, and died in 1903. His nephew and successor, Arthur James Balfour, was a man of brilliant parts, a skilful debater in the House, a writer and philosopher of distinction. But he was scarcely in sympathy with the new age that was dawning. The lords of England still ruled the countryside from their great houses; they still ruled all England in the Balfour Cabinet. But England was now an industrial country, and the aristocracy—to whom Balfour belonged—was not the natural head of an industrial society. A great change was coming, and among the signs of the times were the growth of Socialism and the formation of the Labour Party.

Balfour's  
Ministry  
1902-5

British Socialism was of native growth; one of our earliest Socialists was Robert Owen.<sup>1</sup> Socialism (a word of many meanings) grew up independently in Britain, France, and Germany: some foreign influence entered the British movement later on. The basic idea of Socialism is to abolish the private powers over land and capital and to place the control of industry in public, not private, hands. Private ownership, the Socialists held, led to an unequal distribution of wealth, and to vast profits accumulating in the hands of a few, while the people whose labour helped to produce wealth remained miserably poor. Karl Marx,<sup>2</sup> the German-Jew Socialist and philosopher, who spent a great portion of his life in London, published *Das Kapital* in 1867, summing up his creed. It was translated into English in the 'eighties. But Marx's thesis—that 'Capitalism', as he called the private control of wealth, could be overthrown only by a violent revolution—never found much favour in this country. The Social Democratic Federation, indeed, which held meetings in Trafalgar Square and elsewhere in the 'eighties, worked for some sort of revolution. But the Fabian Society (founded 1883) included economic thinkers like Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Webb,

Socialism

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 772.

<sup>2</sup> His *Communist Manifesto* (1847), an outline of the 'proletarian dictatorship', foreshadowed many measures adopted by Lenin in Russia in the next century. See below, p. 958.

and the dramatist, George Bernard Shaw, who helped to win people to Socialism by more persuasive methods.

A most significant event was the formation (1893) of the Independent Labour Party by Keir Hardie. It was Keir Hardie who first made Socialism a practical issue in British politics; but he shocked some sections of the public when he took his seat in Parliament for the first time (1893). He arrived at the House attired in an ordinary suit, a cloth cap, and a red tie, and accompanied by a brass band. Meanwhile the Trade Union leaders were being gradually, but none the less steadily, won over to Socialism. In 1899 the Trade Union Congress passed a resolution in favour of political action to advance the cause of the working classes. Next year (1900) the Labour Party was formed. Keir Hardie was its first leader; among his lieutenants were Philip Snowden, a Yorkshireman with a vitriolic tongue and a talent for finance, and a young Scotsman named James Ramsay MacDonald. Thus, for the first time in history, as the twentieth century dawned, a political party came into existence, definitely committed to the reorganization of society for the benefit of the mass of the population. It differed from the older parties, too, in having a recognized and doctrinaire set of opinions, established in advance.

The Balfour Government was responsible for one very important reform—the Education Act of 1902. This Act abolished the old School Boards, enabled a system of secondary and of technical schools to be created, and placed all state-aided education in the hands of the local authorities—county and borough councils.<sup>1</sup> The main defect of the Act of 1902 was that it failed to settle the religious problem. The local authorities henceforth maintained all elementary schools, including those founded by the various religious bodies—the Church of England, the Roman Catholics, the Wesleyans. Nonconformists complained that ratepayers were being forced to keep Church schools in existence, and some people objected altogether to religious instruction in schools. This religious difficulty in elementary education was not settled till 1936.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The School Medical Service began to be organized in 1907 and has since greatly contributed to the health of the children and the nation.

<sup>2</sup> This religious controversy ill served the children's interests. By the

The Balfour Government came to grief over the old controversy of Protection versus Free Trade. Chamberlain, who had done so much to split the Liberal Party in 1886, now, twenty years later, nearly broke up the Conservative Party. He came to believe so much in the unity of the Empire that he tried to meet imperial needs by abolishing Free Trade and introducing a moderate tariff. With Tariff Reform he coupled Imperial Preference; that is to say, he wanted a tariff to exclude foreign goods which competed with British industries, but to make exceptions in favour of imperial goods. These proposals divided the Conservative Cabinet in two; most of its members still held that Britain's prosperity depended on the Free Trade established by Peel and Gladstone in the nineteenth century. Chamberlain himself resigned in 1903, and the Government struggled on for another two years. Then Balfour resigned office (December 1905) and the Liberal leader, Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, became Prime Minister.

The Tariff  
Reform  
issue  
1903-5

Resignation  
of Balfour  
1905

A general election was held in the New Year (1906), with the result that the Conservatives sustained an overwhelming defeat. Less than 160 Conservatives were returned, against 390 Liberals (pledged to place 'no taxes on the people's food'), 80 Irish members, and 40 members of the new Labour Party. This surprising result was due to two things—the demand for social reform, with which the Balfour Ministry was not in sympathy, and the split in the late Cabinet over the Tariff issue. Balfour and several members of the Conservative Front Bench lost their seats. Chamberlain retired from active life the same year, and died in 1914. Thus the long Conservative ascendancy, which had lasted since 1886, came to an end.

General  
election  
1906

### 5. *The End of 'Splendid Isolation'*

While most Englishmen were concerned with domestic or colonial problems—the rise of Socialism, the Tariff issue, the Boer War—the greater problem of Europe passed almost unnoticed. 'Splendid isolation' was the term coined to describe

Splendid  
isolation

Education Act of 1936—which raised the school-leaving age to fifteen with exemptions for 'beneficial employment'—a religious settlement was at last effected without sacrificing the principles of religion or of education.

the position of mighty and complacent Britannia at the end of the nineteenth century—until it was seen that this isolation was more dangerous than splendid. The unfriendly attitude of most European countries during the Boer War—their scarcely veiled hope that the British Empire would lose in this colonial struggle—did something to shake British complacency. Above all, Germany was slowly replacing France and Russia as the Power most feared by Britain.

The German Empire under Bismarck 1871-90 The German Empire, as founded by Bismarck under the Kaiser William I (1871-88), was the strongest military Power in Europe; and it was Bismarck's task, for the remainder of his career, to keep Germany in that position, and to guard against the intrigues of defeated France. He based his policy on a Dual Alliance between Germany and Austria, made secret in 1879, and published to the world in 1888. This Dual Alliance was supplemented by the Triple Alliance, when Italy joined in 1882. The territories of the Triple Alliance Power formed a solid block across Europe—a combination so strong that it seemed unlikely that humbled France could ever stand up against it. Still Bismarck was not satisfied; he tried to keep on friendly terms with Russia, and made another secret treaty with the Tsar (1887). Bismarck was, as his successor told him, like a rider on a horse who tossed five balls in the air at once and caught them as they fell. But even Bismarck could not perform impossibilities. It was impossible to remain friendly with Austria-Hungary and Russia at the same time, since these Powers were rivals in the Balkans. In fact, the Austrian alliance was in the long run bound to throw Russia into the arms of France.

William II of Germany (1888-1918) The Kaiser William II (1888-1918) dismissed Bismarck 'dropped the pilot', as *Punch* said in a famous cartoon (1890). The young emperor, anxious to direct affairs himself, appointed a succession of advisers who, to say the least, were not Bismarck's equals in diplomatic skill. The militarist spirit in Germany, encouraged by the Kaiser, became more and more noticeable. Many Germans were influenced by the doctrines preached by Professor Treitschke of Berlin—that war is a 'biological necessity' and that Germany had a 'divinely appointed mission' to mankind. The Kaiser himself had many



wide and visionary schemes. He wanted a larger colonial Empire for Germany; he visited Constantinople (1889) and declared that he had taken the Mohammedans of the world under his protection. The opening of a railway across Asiatic Turkey, joining up with the lines through the Balkans to Austria, was a significant step; it made a Berlin to Baghdad Railway a possibility in peace—or in war.

All this alarmed Europe, and especially France. In 1893 the long-projected alliance with Russia was concluded. Europe was now divided into two armed camps: the Triple Alliance on the one side, the Franco-Russian Alliance on the other. Could Britain maintain her isolation in the face of these facts? Britain, unlike the continental Powers, was not heavily armed on land; her insular position made that unnecessary. The European Powers were all heavily armed; they had all adopted conscription, which meant that they could call up armies of three or four million men in a few weeks or months. To Britain the challenge came on the sea. The Naval Defence Act (1889) had laid down that the British Navy should be superior to the combined strength of any two other Powers. But the Germans, conscious of their natural strength, challenged this position. Since 1887 they had been building the Kiel Canal (opened 1895) connecting the Baltic with the North Sea. They fortified Heligoland, a small island commanding the approaches to the mouths of the Elbe and Weser, which Britain had taken from Denmark in 1807 and which Salisbury had exchanged for Zanzibar in 1890.<sup>1</sup> The German Navy Law of 1898 launched the German Empire on a programme of naval building which did not cease till the Great War. The Conservative Government in England replied by building more ships; later, the Liberal Government felt obliged, for the safety of the country, to follow this example.<sup>2</sup>

Franco-  
Russian  
Alliance  
1893

The Ger-  
man Navy

Europe was now committed to a system of rival alliances

<sup>1</sup> The Kiel Canal was a useful undertaking for commercial purposes; but it had an obvious strategic significance. The fortification of Heligoland was mainly but not solely defensive. A German fleet of a challenging size and the best army on the Continent both threatened Britain directly by the danger of starvation, and indirectly by giving Germany the hegemony of Europe.

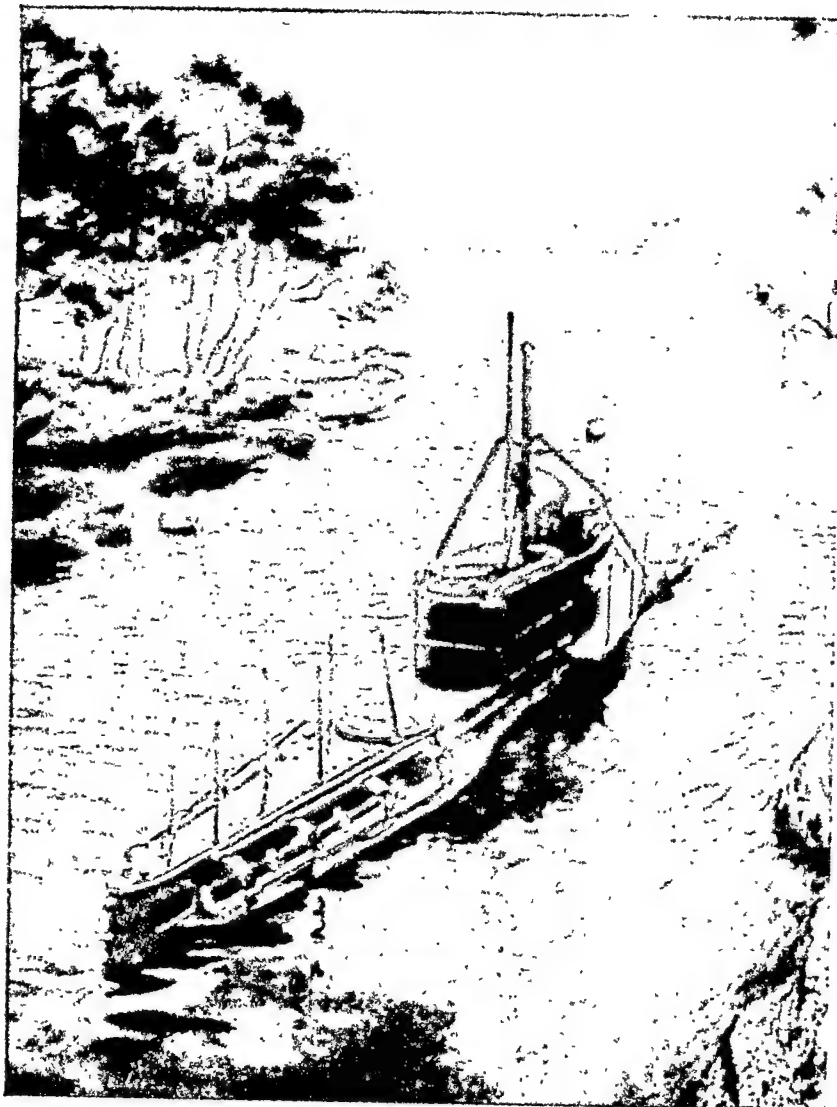
<sup>2</sup> See below, p. 949.

Anglo-Japanese Alliance 1902 and to a race in armaments.<sup>1</sup> Since Britain considered that her own safety depended on the maintenance of her naval supremacy, British ministers joined in the armaments race. Should they also take sides in the rival alliances? The first step in this direction was taken, not in Europe, but in Asia; in 1902 the Anglo-Japanese Alliance was signed. The Japanese were jealous of Russia, and alarmed at German interference in China. The alliance with Britain strengthened their hand against Russia, while they could offer Britain the help of their navy in any possible complications in the Pacific Ocean. In 1904 Japan and Russia were at war—a war which resulted in an unexpected Japanese victory. Had France joined Russia in this war, Britain must, by the terms of this alliance, have joined the other side. Fortunately this did not happen; Britain had already come to an understanding with France.

Germany and Britain British sympathies were not at first directed towards the Franco-Russian side. On the contrary, France had opposed us in Egypt, and we had opposed Russia in the Balkans and in Afghanistan for most of the nineteenth century. In spite of the German naval programme, in spite of the Kruger telegram, in spite of the Kaiser's flaming speeches, our natural inclination was to join Germany rather than France. But negotiations for an Anglo-German alliance, conducted by Chamberlain (1898 and 1902), broke down owing to the indifference of the Kaiser and his ministers. Failure to secure British goodwill, and general under-estimate of Britain because she was a non-military nation—these were characteristic of German pre-War diplomacy.

The Anglo-French Entente 1904 The result of the failure of the German negotiations was the making of the Anglo-French Entente. This momentous step—taken by Balfour's Government and carried through by his Foreign Secretary, Lord Lansdowne—changed the course of British history, and the history of the world. The foreign

<sup>1</sup> The dangers of this situation did not pass unchallenged. In 1899 the Tsar proposed a Peace Conference at The Hague, which was attended by the representatives of twenty-six nations. The Conference accomplished nothing of importance. It is interesting, however, as a prelude to the League of Nations, and as a small sign of the awakening of an international conscience. A second Hague Conference was held in 1907.



A NEW FACTOR IN THE ARMAMENTS RACE

One of the earliest types of submarine in use in the French naval manœuvres of 1906.

ministers of both countries exchanged views. Minor differences were settled; Britain was to have a free hand in Egypt, and France in Morocco. French public opinion, hitherto hostile to Britain, was won over by a personal visit of Edward VII to Paris.<sup>1</sup> But the main question was left undecided. The British ministers would not commit this country to a definite policy, offensive or defensive. All that they would promise was diplomatic support, in case of German hostility in Morocco or elsewhere. In the course of the next ten years, the French tried to commit Britain more definitely to their side; they met with little success.<sup>2</sup> The Entente Cordiale, as it was called, became the basis of British policy; but it was not a military alliance. The Germans deceived themselves by supposing that it would never, in any circumstances, become a military alliance; and ten years later they went to war with France in that belief. The Germans were too decided in the years before 1914, the British too undecided; and decision and indecision alike were causes of the catastrophe.

<sup>1</sup> The Parisians loved King Edward. They named a theatre—the Théâtre Édouard Sept—in his honour. But King Edward's influence on the diplomacy of this period is generally much exaggerated.

<sup>2</sup> See next chapter, Section 2.

Relief of  
Ladysmith  
and  
Mafeking  
1900

Dominions. In a few months a British army of nearly 250,000 men was in South Africa, against the Boers' 30,000. Lord Roberts landed in February 1900. He sent Sir John French to relieve Kimberley, and then brought about the surrender of 4,000 Boers at Paardeberg (February). Buller at the same time relieved Ladysmith at last. Roberts then entered Bloemfontein, the capital of the Orange Free State, which was shortly afterwards annexed to the British Empire. In May, Mafeking was relieved after a 217 days' siege, an event which caused a wild outburst of enthusiasm in London, remembered for many years afterwards. In the same month Roberts entered Johannesburg: Pretoria, the Boer capital, fell on 5 June. The annexation of the Transvaal was proclaimed, and the war seemed to be as good as over.

Kitchener  
and the  
Boers  
1900-2

It was not over, because the undefeated Boer generals prolonged their resistance, which it took Kitchener another eighteen months to break down. His difficulties were tremendous, in view of the fact that every Boer farmer, though not in uniform, was a potential enemy—and every Boer farmer carried a rifle. Kitchener's method, slow but sure, was to build block-houses all over the country and join them up with barbed wire fences. In this way he gradually conquered the country, while at the same time he systematically drove away the stock from the farms, which were burnt, and gathered all the non-combatants, women, and children, into concentration camps. It was a grim method, and it aroused a storm of protest in Britain. Public feeling all over the world, save in Italy and our own Empire, was violently anti-British.<sup>1</sup> Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, who had succeeded Lord Rosebery as leader of the Liberal Party, publicly denounced the British commander for using the 'methods of barbarism'. There was already a strong pro-Boer movement in the country, based on the feeling that Britain, armed with overwhelming force, was bullying a small, weak power, fighting for its life. The news about the concentration camps strengthened this feeling, especially when it was learnt that 20,000 inmates of the camps had died in fourteen months. Chamberlain had to defend Kitchener in

Pro-Boer  
feeling in  
England

<sup>1</sup> It was this more than anything else that made Britain realize that her isolation was far from 'splendid'. See Section 5.

## XLIII

### THE WORLD CRISIS

(1905-22)

#### I. *The Liberal Reformers (1905-14)*

Campbell-  
Bannerman  
Ministry  
1905-8

WITH the opening of the Parliament of 1906 the Liberal Party entered on its last and greatest Ministry. The Prime Minister Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, was destined to survive only two years; but his Ministry contained a remarkable number of able men. H. H. Asquith, who succeeded to the Premiership, was at first Chancellor of the Exchequer; Sir Edward Grey was Foreign Secretary, and R. B. Haldane was at the War Office. David Lloyd George, who had started life in a Welsh village and raised himself by his own abilities to the front rank, entered the Cabinet as President of the Board of Trade.<sup>1</sup>

The Lords'  
Veto

Liberal majority, 84 over all other parties combined, was in fact larger still, since the Liberals could count on the support of the Labour and Irish members. Ministers were interested in social reform, and in fact achieved much. But they were hampered all along by the Conservative majority in the House of Lords. In 1906 the Lords threw out an Education Bill and a Plural Voting Bill; the Liberals began seriously to consider the question of limiting the powers of the Upper Chamber.

The greatest achievement of the Campbell-Bannerman Ministry was the granting of self-government to the Boer colonies in South Africa, which was the work of the Prime Minister himself.<sup>2</sup> Apart from this, the most outstanding work was done by Mr. Lloyd George and Haldane. Mr. Lloyd George, at the Board of Trade, passed several useful reforms, the most striking of which was the setting up of the Port of London Authority. The Ministry also passed a Workmen's Compensation Act (1906), which compelled employers to compensate their workpeople for injuries caused by accident in the course

<sup>1</sup> Ministers in minor posts included Mr. R. McKenna, Mr. H. Samuel, and Mr. Winston Churchill.

<sup>2</sup> See above, p. 929.

of their employment; it applied to employees receiving less than £250 per annum.<sup>1</sup>

Haldane, the War Secretary, was probably the ablest British minister who has ever held that office.<sup>2</sup> He created the General Staff of the British Army. He prepared a small but well-equipped Expeditionary Force capable of being mobilized quickly in case of war. Finally he reorganized the voluntary Services both in civil life and in the schools; the result was the Territorial Army and the Officers' Training Corps. Britain was in 1914 incomparably better prepared for war than she had been in the nineteenth century: and the preparation was due in large measure to Richard Burdon Haldane. The ingratitude with which he was afterwards treated by his country was borne by Haldane with all the calmness of a great mind in adversity.

It was during the Liberal Ministry that the question of Woman Suffrage became prominent. Mrs. Pankhurst had founded the Women's Social and Political Union in 1903; she and her daughter Christabel, and Mrs. Pethick-Lawrence, were responsible for what became known as the Militant Suffragette movement. Their methods, at first, consisted in organizing interruptions at meetings addressed by Cabinet Ministers, in order to force the attention of the Government on themselves. Later, and with a similar object, they took to smashing shop windows and much more serious outrages.

Campbell-Bannerman died in 1908, and was succeeded as Premier by Asquith, a statesman of stoic virtue and great gifts. Though devoid of the Radical fire which characterized both his predecessor and his successor (Mr. Lloyd George), Asquith yet led the Liberal Party to its greatest triumphs by virtue of his

<sup>1</sup> Raised to £350 by the Act of 1925. An earlier Workmen's Compensation Act had been passed (1897) by the Salisbury Ministry, under the influence of Joseph Chamberlain.

<sup>2</sup> Lord Haig's opinion. During the War, Haldane, who had been educated in Germany, was ignorantly and unfairly persecuted by certain newspapers. At the end of the War, Haldane took no part in the triumph of the Army he had helped to create. But the victorious general, Haig, did not forget him. He called on the lonely statesman and left a copy of his dispatches. Inside was written: 'To Richard Burdon Haldane, the greatest Secretary of State for War England ever had.'

Haldane

The Suffragettes

First Asquith Ministry 1908-15

steadiness and courage. His commanding presence and his wonderful gifts as a parliamentary debater made him a power to be reckoned with in the House of Commons. Mr. Lloyd George succeeded Asquith at the Exchequer; Mr. McKenna went to the Admiralty, to be replaced later (1911) by Mr. Winston Churchill.

The first reform passed by the Asquith Ministry was a modest scheme of Old Age Pensions (1908), giving a pension of 5s. a week to old people over seventy, but only 7s. 6d. to an aged married couple. The same year a Bill limiting work in coal mines to eight hours a day was passed. Later, a Resolution of the House of Commons (1911) settled a salary of £400 a year on M.P.s, thus enabling poor men to enter Parliament without outside help. These and many other reforms are to the credit of the Liberal Ministry, in a period of almost unexampled legislative activity. But all pale before the two great Lloyd George measures, the People's Budget (1909) and the National Health Insurance Act (1911).

The Budget of 1909 has been described as the most revolutionary series of financial proposals which had ever been laid before a British Parliament. The McKenna estimates for the Navy<sup>1</sup> called for extra taxation. But the Budget proposed to raise a revenue of £200 million (a larger sum than had even been contemplated before, even in time of war) and to devote a large portion of this sum to social services. In a word, it proposed to carry much farther the tendency of the last hundred years not only towards State interference, but towards State aid to the poorer sections of the community. It was called the People's Budget; to raise the necessary revenue, it was intended to tax the rich as they had never been taxed before. In addition to the ordinary Income Tax, a new Super Tax was imposed on incomes over £3,000 a year. A duty was imposed on the unearned increment of land-value, and death duties, payable when estates changed hands, were

<sup>1</sup> See next section.

<sup>2</sup> *Unearned increment*—the increment, or increased value, of land (or other property) that takes place without labour or expenditure on the part of the owner, such increment being due, for example, to the building and other activities of the community.



increased on estates of between £5,000 and a million. The drink trade was also heavily taxed. It was in this Budget, too, that Mr. Lloyd George created the Road Fund—a notable act of statesmanship, and the seed from which all our subsequent motor-road development has grown.

The Budget proposals raised a storm of indignation among the well-to-do, whose protests were voiced by the Opposition in the Commons, and by the Tory majority in the Lords. The author of the Budget was by no means dismayed by this criticism. On the contrary, he went about the country speaking in defence of his proposals. He attacked the landlords and wealthy classes with a virulence not even exceeded by Joseph Chamberlain in his Radical days. He warned the Lords that they were 'forcing revolution'.

'If they begin' [he said at Newcastle] 'issues will be raised that they little dream of, questions will be asked that are now whispered in humble voices. The question will be asked: Should 500 men, ordinary men, chosen accidentally from among the unemployed,<sup>1</sup> over-ride the judgement—the deliberate judgement—of millions of people who are engaged in the industry which makes the wealth of the country? . . . Another question will be: Who ordained that a few should have the land of Britain as a perquisite, who made 10,000 people owners of the soil, and the rest of us trespassers in the land of our birth? . . . These are the questions that will be asked. The answers are charged with peril for the order of things the Peers represent; but they are fraught with rare and refreshing fruit for the parched lips of the multitude who have been treading the dusty road along which the people have marched through the dark ages, which are now emerging into the light.'<sup>2</sup>

One of Mr. Lloyd George's most telling points was made against the landlords' objection to the State valuation of land. He cited many instances where landlords had made huge profits out of the increase in land-value; and he now proposed that in such cases the State should take 20 per cent. of the increase. If the landlords objected to this, he held them up to ridicule in his speeches. Here is one example, out of many. Some mining investors (said Mr. Lloyd George) bought some property in Yorkshire. 'Will you allow us to build a few cottages?'

<sup>1</sup> i.e. the House of Lords.

<sup>2</sup> Newcastle Speech, 9 Oct. 1909.

DATE SUMMARY: THE BRITISH IMPERIALISTS  
(1885-1905)

HOME AFFAIRS		FOREIGN AND IMPERIAL	
LIBERALS AND UNIONISTS (1885-95)			
1885-6 First Salisbury Ministry		1885 Canadian Pacific Railway	
1885 Shaftesbury <i>d.</i>		British E. Africa Co.	
		DAIMLER'S PETROL ENGINE	
1886 Third Gladstone Ministry		1886 Burmese War	
HOME RULE BILL		Gold in Transvaal	
1886-92 Second Salisbury Ministry			
1887 Victoria's First Jubilee			
1888 Matthew Arnold <i>d.</i>		1888 William II (Germany) <i>acc.</i>	
1889 Naval Defence Act		1889 British S. Africa Co.	
		RHODESIA	
1890 Cardinal Newman <i>d.</i>		1890 Fall of Bismarck	
1892 Tennyson <i>d.</i>			
1893 Second Home Rule Bill		1893 Franco-Russian Alliance	
Gladstone retires			
Independent Labour Party			
1894-5 Rosebery Ministry			
SALISBURY AND CHAMBERLAIN (1895-1902)			
1895-1902 Third Salisbury Ministry		1895 Jameson Raid	
		Kiel Canal opened	
1895-1903 Chamberlain Colonial Sec.		1896-8 Sudan conquered	
1896 William Morris <i>d.</i>			
1897 Diamond Jubilee			
		1898 German Navy Law	
1900 LABOUR PARTY formed		1899-1902 BOER WAR	
Ruskin <i>d.</i>		1900 Zeppelins	
1901 QUEEN VICTORIA <i>d.</i>		Relief of Mafeking	
		1901 COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA	
1901-10 Edward VII		1902 Anglo-Japanese Alliance	
		Rhodes <i>d.</i>	
		Treaty of Vereeniging (Boers)	
BALFOUR (1902-5)			
1902 Education Act		1902 Wireless (Marconi)	
1903 Chamberlain resigns			
Tariff Reform Campaign			
		1904 ANGLO-FRENCH ENTENTE	
1905 Balfour resigns		1904-5 Russo-Japanese War	
		1905 Morocco Crisis	

Bill, and in strangely similar circumstances, the Parliament Act became Law. The power of the Upper House to thwart the national will was gone for ever; the way lay open for social reform, and more Lloyd Georgian Budgets. The taxes imposed in 1909 now came into operation.

This same eventful year, 1911, saw also the passage of the National Health Insurance Act, another of Mr. Lloyd George's reforms. The Act, which was in two parts, dealt with Health and Unemployment. Health Insurance covered all workers earning less than £160 a year, and provided that all such workers should be insured against sickness. Contributions of a few pence per week were paid into an Insurance Fund by the worker, by his employer, and by the State. The workers then had to join a doctor's 'panel', as it was called, which provided free medical treatment. This part of the Act affected 14 million people. Unemployment Insurance, when first introduced, covered 2½ million people only, and affected eight trades; it has since been extended to practically all trades.<sup>1</sup> The principle was the same as in Health Insurance—weekly contributions from the worker, his employer, and the State. The Act awarded 7s. a week benefit to insured workers over eighteen years of age who lost their employment.

The Asquith Government had promised the Irish Party to bring in a Home Rule Bill, in return for Irish support for the Budget. The Home Rule issue, which had lain dormant since 1894, soon became the question of the hour. A Bill giving Home Rule to Ireland was introduced (1911) and passed the Commons three times. It was thrice rejected by the Lords, but, under the operation of the Parliament Act, it became law in 1914. (It was not put into force then, however, owing to the outbreak of the Great War.) During the intervening time, political passions rose to heights surpassing even the storms over the People's Budget and the Parliament Act. Ulster, Protestant Ulster, would not face the prospect of being ruled by a Dublin Parliament; all the religious and racial strife of centuries was behind her refusal. Led by Sir Edward Carson, Ulster began to arm, and to import rifles; Southern Ireland armed too. Thus, by 1914, there were two armed volunteer

<sup>1</sup> See below, p. 971.

forces in Ireland, facing each other, inflammable and hot while the British Government and people stood looking helplessly on. There was worse to follow. Civil War appeared imminent, an effort was made to test the feelings of the Army in Ireland. This was bungled so badly, that it appeared little better than an effort to encourage the officers—who were Unionists almost to a man—to proclaim their disloyalty.

Curragh incident, 1914 (March) the Curragh (March 1914) a large number of officers said they would rather accept dismissal than be ordered not to do their duty. It seemed that the Government must put down the revolt in Ulster by force—but could they rely on the Army to carry out their orders? Matters had come to this pass when the Government summoned the rival English and Irish leaders to a conference at Buckingham Palace. The conference broke down; civil war seemed a stage nearer in Ireland—possibly in England too. So matters stood in July 1914.

Britain in July 1914 A foreigner looking at England in the early summer of 1914—and many foreigners looked closely at England—would have observed a bewildering scene. Political controversy had not been carried to such lengths for eighty years. Class feeling had been greatly embittered by the action of the Lords in throwing out the People's Budget, and it had not died down since the passage of the Parliament Act. Industrial conflict was practically incessant, and there were strikes every year, the biggest being the Railway Strike of 1911 and the Coal Strike of 1912. The Coal Strike—the largest strike that had so far taken place in Great Britain—was settled by the passage of a Coal Mines Minimum Wages Act. The activities of the militant suffragettes were at their height during 1912 and 1913. Women chained themselves to railings, entered the National Gallery and slashed valuable pictures, and burnt down a villa belonging to Mr. Lloyd George; one even threw herself in front of a horse at the Derby. In Ireland Sir Edward Carson, backed by English Conservative M.P.s, including Bonar Law, then Leader of the Opposition, was organizing armed rebellion. Everywhere the keynote was violence—in industry, in the suffrage movement, in Ireland; it almost seemed as though the British state was on the point of breaking up, and that democracy was not going to work after all.

Such, without doubt, was the impression which many foreign visitors, especially Germans, received of Britain immediately before the War. They mistook the bitter conflicts of the time for a sign of decadence; looking at the sequel, we can only conclude that they were, rather, a sign of vitality. A roomful of wrangling friends may be quieted in an instant by a shot fired from outside by an enemy hand. So it was with Britain in 1914. As soon as the threat of war became serious (1 Aug.), the Conservative leaders hastened to assure the Government of their unqualified support, and a year afterwards they joined the Ministry. Suffragettes quickly enrolled as nurses or munition workers; strikers worked loyally in their industries or fought bravely in the field; most remarkable of all, Irishmen of all creeds enlisted in the British Army. It is true that this surprising unity was not maintained throughout the War. But national unity *was* achieved in 1914, with an amazing suddenness which confounded our foes. Foreign nations, friends and foes alike, were astonished at the change in the British people; perhaps the British people were a little astonished at themselves.

## 2. *The Pre-War Crises (1905-14)*

British foreign policy, for the ten years preceding the Great War, was partly based on the Anglo-French Entente of 1904,<sup>1</sup> which itself was influenced by a growing suspicion of Germany, German diplomacy, and German naval armaments. The aggressive attitude of the German Government was due to several causes. In Europe the Germans complained of being 'encircled' by the Franco-Russian alliance with Britain in the background. Abroad they contended that their position was cramped by the success of British Imperialism; they compared the small German colonial empire with that of Britain, straddling over the world, and occupying the fairest portions of the earth. The feeling that Germany had not been given her rightful 'place in the sun' accounted for much that was uncompromising in the German approach to other nations. Nearly every year produced a renewal of the tension; till at last mutual suspicion, and a strained situation, led to war.

<sup>1</sup> See above, pp. 936-8.

Moroccan  
crisis  
1905-6

The Liberal Government which took office in December 1905 was at once confronted with a European crisis. Relying on their understanding with England, the French decided to go forward in Morocco. Early in 1905 a French mission had arrived at Fez, and seemed to be treating this part of Morocco as a French protectorate. The Germans at once protested; the Kaiser went to Tangier and made one of his bellicose speeches. Practically under threat of war, France agreed to submit her Moroccan claim to a European conference; Delcassé, the French Foreign Minister, had to resign. Nothing much came of the conference, held at Algeciras (1906), but the fact that Britain supported France was important. On this occasion Britain had definitely ranged herself—as far as diplomacy went—on the side of France, against Germany, and was likely to do so again.

Anglo-  
French  
military  
conversations

The main result of the Moroccan crisis was to draw France and Britain close together. Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman authorized 'military conversations' between the British and French General Staffs. These had taken place in a more rudimentary and unofficial way under Lord Lansdowne. 'Conversations' were held to discuss military plans in the event of the two countries becoming allies in war. No understanding was ever given that they *should* become allies; nevertheless the conversations proceeded on that assumption. The British public and Parliament knew nothing of this; the 'conversations' were even kept secret from all but three or four members of the Cabinet. It was judged that publicity might be harmful and arouse unnecessary alarm, and it is in fact probable that the majority in the Liberal Cabinet would not have sanctioned them. In 1907 another *entente* was concluded, this time with Russia. Anglo-Russian differences in Persia were settled on the basis of dividing Persia into two 'spheres of influence'. The bonds uniting Britain with the Franco-Russian alliance were being drawn closer.

First  
Bosnian  
crisis, 1908

In 1908 another European crisis occurred. Austria-Hungary suddenly proclaimed the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which had been an Austrian protectorate since 1878. The Turks were furious, but could do nothing. Russia would have liked to intervene but, in view of the menacing attitude

of Germany, who supported Austria-Hungary, the Tsar and his ministers climbed down. Another German triumph.

Next year Mr. McKenna, First Lord of the Admiralty, submitted increased naval estimates to Parliament. Four British dreadnoughts<sup>1</sup> were to be laid down at once; four more were to follow. Henceforth the naval armaments race went on unchecked. Mr. Winston Churchill, who succeeded Mr. McKenna at the Admiralty (1911), proposed a 'naval holiday' to Germany. The Germans turned a deaf ear to this proposal, and both sides went on building.

A year seldom passed by, in this uneasy period, without at least one fresh crisis. The French were again active in Morocco, and again the Germans protested. Their protest this time took the form of sending the gunboat *Panther* to Agadir, a lonely seaport on the Moroccan coast where, it was claimed, there were 'German interests'. The German attitude was most menacing; it looked as though France would be compelled to withdraw from Morocco under threat of war. The Germans took no notice of British protests, and it was this fact that decided Mr. Lloyd George, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, to give them to understand that Britain could not, and would not, be ignored. In a speech at the Mansion House, of which the substance had been discussed with Sir Edward Grey, the Chancellor gave this grave warning to the rulers of Germany:

Agadir  
crisis, 1911

'I believe it is essential in the highest interests not merely of this country, but of the world, that Britain should at all hazards maintain her place and her prestige among the Great Powers of the world. Her potent influence has many a time been in the past, and may yet be in the future, invaluable to the cause of human liberty. . . . I would make great sacrifices to preserve peace. . . . But if a situation were to be forced upon us in which peace could only be preserved by the surrender of the great and beneficent position Britain has won by centuries of heroism and achievement, by allowing Britain to be treated where her interests were vitally affected as if she were of no account in the Cabinet of Nations, then I say emphatically that peace at that price would be a

<sup>1</sup> *Dreadnought* was the name of the first British battleship (launched 1906) of a powerful type superior in armament to all its predecessors. Its invention much intensified naval rivalry.

they asked the landlord. 'Certainly,' he replied, 'I shall want a small return—£6 or £10 an acre.' 'Quite moderate' (commented Mr. Lloyd George); 'he is really a most moderate landlord. The land was at 15s. 6d., and he charges £10. That is only 18 times the value of the land. I can give you cases where landlords have charged 30, 40 or 100 times the value of the land.'

Two general elections 1910 (January and December)      Excitement was at its height when the Budget was sent up to the House of Lords. Would the Lords break all tradition and throw out the national Budget which had passed the Commons? They threw it out; the daily press shrieked in excited headlines. Mr. Asquith decided on a general election, which was held in January 1910. He came back with a reduced majority, and now dependent on the Irish vote. The Government then brought in a Parliament Bill, making it illegal for the Lords to throw out money Bills in any circumstances. Besides this, the power of the Upper House was further to be limited. Their veto on all legislation—other than financial—was made suspensive; that is to say they could hold up a Bill passed by the Commons for two years, after which it would become law in spite of their veto. Conservative newspapers raged, and complained that the Constitution was being destroyed. Even the death of Edward VII in May, and the accession of a new king—George V (1910–36)—scarcely turned people's thoughts from the political storm.<sup>1</sup> A second general election in December confirmed the Government in power, and in 1911 the Parliament Act was passed. A threat to create 500 Liberal peers ensured its passage through the Lords. Many Tory peers abstained from voting; 29 voted with the Government. Thus, amid public excitement not paralleled since the First Reform

Death of Edward VII, 1910

<sup>1</sup> But there were other things happening in these years which show the trend of the times—in 1909 Blériot flew across the Channel; in 1910 'Dr.' Crippen had the distinction of being the first criminal to be arrested by *Wireless*; in 1911 China became a Republic; in 1912 Captain Scott reached the *South Pole* (but after Amundsen) and died there, 'creating another epic of the snows'; and in that year the world's largest ship, the *Titanic*, sank on her maiden voyage; in 1913 the first vessel passed through the *Panama Canal*—and in 1913 Germany rejected Mr. Winston Churchill's suggestion of a year's 'naval holiday' (i.e. cessation of naval competition).



entitled to in the southern Balkans. But across their northern frontier lay Bosnia, peopled by Serbs, ruled by the Emperor

Second  
Bosnian  
crisis  
1914



THE BALKANS: 1908-13

of Austria. Two million Jugo Slavs in Bosnia burned with patriotic feeling, and wished to be united to their victorious brethren in the Serbian kingdom, and six million other Jugo Slavs wished the same. The situation was dangerous in the

extreme. On 28 June 1914, the Archduke Franz Ferdinand, heir to the Austrian throne, went down to Sarajevo, the Bosnian capital. As he was driving through the town he was assassinated; the murderer was a Serbian subject of the Austrian Emperor.

Assassination of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand June 1914

'Yet another European crisis!' said the English newspaper reader wearily—if he bothered to read at all. But this time meant war. The Austro-Hungarian Government, naturally incensed at the murder of the heir to the throne, asserted that the assassin had acted at the instigation of the Serbian Government. They waited a month; then they sent an ultimatum to Belgrade, assuming the guilt of the Serbian Government, demanding the most abject surrender (July 1914). The German Government had already taken the momentous step of declaring that Austria-Hungary could count on German support; this stiffened the Austrian attitude and made the dispatch of the ultimatum possible. The Serbian offers to give a quarter satisfaction were turned down. At the last moment Germany made an effort in favour of moderation, but on 28 July Austria declared war on Serbia and bombarded Belgrade.

Austrian ultimatum July

It was still possible to localize the war, and for that object Sir Edward Grey strove for several difficult days. But Russia was determined not to bow, as in 1908, to German threats; she began to mobilize. Germany gave an evasive reply to the British plea for a Conference; instead, she sent an ultimatum to Russia demanding the instant demobilization of the Russian Army. This request was refused, and Germany declared war on Russia, and on her ally, France.

Europe at war

Would Britain be involved? A majority of the Cabinet were against intervention,<sup>1</sup> though, as a precautionary measure, the British fleet, which was collected for a test mobilization, was prevented from dispersing on 26 July. On 2 August the Cabinet decided to give an assurance to the French Government that 'if the German fleet comes into the Channel or through the North Sea to undertake hostile operations against French coasts or shipping, the British fleet would give all the protection in its power'. This decision was not regarded by the

<sup>1</sup> 'Up till luncheon time (Sunday, Aug. 2) it looked as though a majority would resign.' (Churchill, *World Crisis*, i.)

Cabinet as committing England to war, and was subject to consent of Parliament. The next day, on 3 August, an appeal arrived from the King of the Belgians, asking for British help. Germany had sent an ultimatum to Belgium demanding the free passage of the German armies across that country on their way to invade France; the demand had been refused. It had been Britain's age-long policy that the Belgian coast should not be in the hands of any adjacent Great Power which might use those shores as a possible basis for invasion. It was in pursuit of this principle of national security that Britain had fought against Philip II of Spain, Louis XIV, and Napoleon of France, and that she was now to fight against William II of Germany.

German  
invasion of  
Belgium

The news of the Belgian invasion was decisive. Sir Edward Grey spoke in the House of Commons and it was overwhelmingly clear that the cause of Belgium would be defended by British public opinion, and that Parliament would uphold the assurance to France. If Britain was not bound by any treaty to come to the aid of France, she was bound to Belgium by the Treaty of 1839.<sup>1</sup> That day an ultimatum was dispatched to Germany demanding the immediate withdrawal of her forces from Belgian soil. No reply was received, and in twenty-four hours Britain and Germany were at war (4 August 1914).

Britain at  
war, 4 Aug.  
1914

### 3. *The Great War*<sup>2</sup>

#### (a) *The Character of the War.*

The Great War was fought by land, sea, and air, and on a scale hitherto unknown in history. On land, four of the original combatants, Germany, Austria, Russia, and France, were able, by virtue of their conscription system, to put in the field armies of several millions of men almost at once; Britain also adopted conscription in 1916. After the first German effort to overwhelm France had failed—by November 1914—the opposing

Numbers  
engaged

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 826. As Gladstone had done in 1870, so now in 1914, Grey protested that Britain, France, and Germany had all sworn by the Treaty of 1839 to respect the neutrality of Belgium.

<sup>2</sup> A more detailed account of the Great War will be found in Chap. XLIII A; in the present section some general considerations will be stated.

armies on the Western Front settled down to conditions of trench warfare. This state of affairs lasted for four years. The Germans, with their usual thoroughness, supplied their infantry with deep, well-constructed dug-outs, often lit by electric light and furnished with simple beds. The British infantry, on the other hand, were much less comfortable and more crowded together in the forward trenches. A variety of diseases—trench feet, trench fever, and so on—afflicted both armies who had to endure all the severities of winter without any of artificial heat (at any rate in the front line) and without fresh food.

The weapons of war were multiplied on both sides, and here the original advantage lay with the Germans. Their high explosive shells were greatly superior both in quality and quantity to ours, until Mr. Lloyd George took charge of the Ministry of Munitions.<sup>1</sup> Terrible damage was done to towns and villages and to woods, gardens, and orchards, which happened to come within the war zone. The worst places on the British front were the Ypres Salient and the Somme battle-field. On the Somme one could stand on the top of a hill and look for several miles across country without seeing a living thing—not a tree, not a flower, not a blade of grass. All was one vast area of churned-up earth and mud, pitted with innumerable shell-holes, filled with water, broken rifles, abandoned equipment—and the corpses of the slain. Rats infested the trenches and the stench in some of the worst areas was enough to sick the strongest stomach. Add to all this the intermittent bombardment from the enemy artillery, which made targets not only of the infantry trenches, but of places behind the front line, through which the long lines of communication passed. During the Somme battle, a considerable proportion of the trenches simply ceased to exist; the men lay in shell-holes, or perhaps rested for a few hours in old dug-outs, captured from the Germans.

The effects of shell-fire were among the most nerve-racking experiences of the War; though equally horrible was the use of poison gas (first used, by the Germans, in 1915), which killed many men, and disabled others for the rest of their lives. All

<sup>1</sup> See below, p. 968.



MODERN WARFARE

humiliation intolerable for a great country like ours to endure.'<sup>1</sup>

The German Government was greatly impressed by his speech, though angry with Mr. Lloyd George, whom it had hitherto regarded as the most pacific of British ministers. The Agadir crisis passed, and with it the threat of war, though France had to make considerable concessions to Germany in West Africa, to balance the French gains in Morocco.

Anglo-French Naval Agreement 1912 War drew perceptibly nearer in 1912. Germany, towards the end of the year, further increased her huge army, and British and French ministers grew more alarmed. A naval agreement was concluded with France, by virtue of which the French fleet was concentrated in the Mediterranean, leaving the British fleet free to guard the North Sea. No definite alliance was concluded; but it made it possible for some people to say that we were bound in honour to protect the northern and Atlantic coasts of France. This obligation was, however, never admitted by Mr. Asquith or by the majority of the Cabinet.

The Balkan Wars 1912-13 Meanwhile war broke out in the Balkans, and the break-up of the Turkish Empire was at hand. Italy had already seized the Turkish province of Tripoli (1911), and the Balkan races under the inspiration of Russia took the opportunity to strike at their hated enemy. The First Balkan War (1912) resulted in striking victories for the Balkan allies, Greece, Serbia, and Bulgaria. The Turks were driven from their European provinces, save the area round Constantinople. Then the victors quarrelled (Second Balkan War, 1913); the Bulgarians attacked their allies, but were defeated. The Turks took the opportunity to retake Adrianople, which they had lost. When peace was made, the Bulgarians had to surrender to Serbia some of the territory they had won in the first war.

Two results followed from this. First, the Bulgarians felt injured, and awaited an opportunity to get their revenge on Serbia; the opportunity arose in the Great War. Secondly, the passions of the Serbians were inflamed by victory. They had already won as much as, indeed more than, they were

<sup>1</sup> Gooch and Temperley, *British Documents*, vii. 391.

Empire would fly asunder as soon as any severe strain was put upon the apparently weak bonds which held them together. Canada, South Africa, Australia, New Zealand, and India all raised large contingents to fight in the War; and these troops took part in the fighting in Europe and Asia, and also conquered some of the enemy's colonies, like German South-West Africa and German New Guinea. Native troops from Asia and Africa were also employed in France.

When the War began, the youth of Britain went into it in a spirit of adventure, almost of gaiety, which is well expressed in Rupert Brooke's famous sonnet: The spirit  
of Britain

Now, God be thanked Who has matched us with His hour,  
And caught our youth, and wakened us from sleeping. . . .

But, as the dreadful years went by, each with its awful toll of young men's lives, this spirit passed. War-weariness became apparent, though, in Britain at least, men and women hardened their resolve to see this thing through to a finish. In the middle of the War, Britain found a national leader in David Lloyd George (Prime Minister, December 1916-22) whose sanguine yet determined spirit had much to do with the final victory. In an interview granted to an American newspaper a few months before assuming the Premiership, Mr. Lloyd George had shown how he approached the question of victory. While deploring the cruelty of war, he said that it would be greater cruelty to make peace 'while there remains the possibility of civilization being menaced from the same quarter'. 'How long do you figure this can and must go on?' asked the American. 'There is neither clock nor calendar in the British Army to-day', replied the British minister. 'Only the result counts, not the time consumed in achieving it. It took England twenty years to defeat Napoleon, and the first fifteen of those years were black with British defeats. It will not take twenty years to win this war but, whatever time is required, it will be done.'<sup>1</sup>

The War cost the British Empire nearly a million dead, and a million more permanently disabled. The Allied losses were Casualties

<sup>1</sup> Lloyd George, *War Memoirs*, iii. 854.

correspondingly great, the German even greater;<sup>1</sup> the number of Germans killed reached the appalling total of 1,800,000, nearly twice that of the British Empire. The Russian toll was probably as great as the German.

(b) *Revolution and Armistice.*

The War was accompanied, in its final stages, by revolution which changed the course of history in several countries. The first of these occurred in Russia, where the incompetence of the Imperial Government led to disaster. In the spring of 1917 there was a revolution in Petrograd, and mutinies in the Fleet, followed by the overthrow of the Government and the abdication of the Tsar, Nicholas II (March 1917). A provisional government was set up first under Prince Lvov and then under Kerensky; but, in November 1917, Kerensky was overthrown by Lenin, the leader of the Bolsheviks,<sup>2</sup> who had waited all his life for this opportunity. Lenin was a follower of Karl Marx, the apostle of Communism, who had taught that capitalist society ought to be overthrown, but that it *can* only be overthrown by a violent revolution. The War and the consequent breakdown of Russian administration provided the ideal opportunity for a Communist revolution; Lenin provided the means. Lenin was, as his worst enemies admit, a man of amazing powers. He had the vision to foresee, and the ruthlessness necessary to carry out, a revolution involving the destruction, in Russia, of private property, the old ideas of family life and the Christian religion. He counted the cost of this upheaval—and it cost several million lives—but he never faltered or took his eyes off his eventual goal.

	<i>Killed</i>	<i>Wounded</i>
1 British Empire	950,000	2,000,000
France . . .	1,300,000	unpublished
Italy . . .	450,000	950,000
U.S.A. . . .	115,000	200,000
Russia . . .	1,700,000	5,000,000 (conjectural)
Germany . .	1,800,000	4,000,000
Austria . . .	1,200,000	3,000,000

(In round figures.) (See Cruttwell, *History of the War*.)

<sup>2</sup> Bolshevik = 'majority'; but in this case it was merely the majority of a small conference (1903) of the exiled members of the Russian Social Democratic Party.



This revolution was still proceeding when the War ended, but six months before that event the Bolsheviks made peace with Germany (Treaty of Brest-Litovsk: see below, p. 994), surrendering all their western provinces. The Allies, however, made some attempt to succour the White Russians, as those who opposed the Bolsheviks were called. Allied troops were landed in Siberia. But, at the end of the War, the Western Powers were in no mood to continue fighting in any portion of the globe. So the White Russians were abandoned to their hard fate. The army and supporters of Gen. Denikin, who had been holding the Don region, were driven into Odessa (1919). British ships took away some of the terror-stricken refugees from the doomed town, but most of them had to be left behind. The Bolsheviks were equally successful in Siberia, and next year (1920) they turned on the Poles, who were invading Russia, and pursued them back to their own country. The Bolsheviks were driven back almost from the gates of Warsaw by Marshal Pilsudski, and thereafter left Poland in peace. But Russia was now completely under their control.

To return to Germany. The collapse of Russia in 1917 was followed almost immediately by the declaration of war by America, so that the Germans lost more than they gained. The American entry into the War was caused directly by the ruthlessness of the submarine campaign. The Germans now tried, by a knock-out blow (March-July 1918), to compel Britain and France to make peace before America could come effectively to their aid. When this attempt had failed—by July—the Germans had to face the combined Allied attack, under Marshal Foch, delivered in the late summer of 1918, on the Western Front. But by this time the British naval blockade had reduced Germany to starvation and untold suffering; the German nation had reached the limits of its endurance.

It was then (October 1918) that the German Government appealed to the American President, Woodrow Wilson, who replied suggesting the terms on which the Allies would be prepared to make peace. These terms were based on the President's famous Fourteen Points, contained in his Message to Congress (8 January 1918), which he believed would herald a new era in world history. These Points contained the following suggestions:

The  
Russian  
Civil War  
1917-20

America  
enters the  
War, 1917

President  
Wilson's  
Notes

The  
Fourteen  
Points  
1918

the ingenuity of 'civilized' man was called forth in the service of murder and destruction. Old and new mixed in this modern inferno—for bombs were an ancient contrivance revived, while tanks (1916-18) were a new invention. The Germans were very skilful at concealing their machine-guns. In some places they had underground pits into which the guns could be sunk during a bombardment. Then, when the barrage lifted and the British infantry came over, the guns were raised again into place. Thousands of Britain's bravest sons were mown down in this deadly fire.

Sea Contrary to general expectation, there was only one battle between the opposing Grand Fleets of Britain and Germany on the grand scale; and even that battle, Jutland, was indecisive. But the Germans struck at English shipping through the submarine; in 1917 their U-boats nearly crippled Britain, which was within an ace of being starved into surrender. When this menace was at length removed, or at least reduced to manageable proportions,<sup>1</sup> the tables were turned. War became a matter of endurance; whole populations were involved, and the British naval blockade of Germany brought about the eventual starvation of a large proportion of the German people. It was a war of attrition.

The air The use of the air-arm for the first time in war pointed the way to immense possibilities of the future—for the use of nations bent on mutual homicide. As an adjunct to the artillery, the aeroplane proved extremely useful; maps of the enemy trenches were always prepared from air photographs. The air-raids Germans also sent their airships, called Zeppelins after their inventor, to raid England, and to terrorize the populations of London and other towns. Blinds were drawn and lamps remained unlit in war-time England; often the warning sirens told of the unseen enemy overhead, and men and women took what shelter they could. Later the Germans sent aeroplanes, both on daylight and moonlight raids. On the whole the damage done was small.

The Empire at war The German belief that the British were a decadent, because an unmilitary, nation proved to be entirely unfounded. So did the common idea that the component parts of the British

<sup>1</sup> See below, p. 990.

guns, 25,000 machine-guns, and 1,700 aeroplanes to be given up to the Allies. All Allied prisoners of war to be restored at once. (ii) All German submarines to be given up; also 10 battle-ships, 14 cruisers, and 50 destroyers. These terms implied the total defeat of Germany. Her soldiers, sent practically unarmed across the Rhine, were powerless. Her fleet steamed out of German waters into Scapa Flow, where it surrendered to Britain. It was afterwards scuttled by orders of its commander.

#### 4. *The Peace Treaties*

The Conference charged with the momentous task of re-modelling the world after the Great War met at Paris in 1919. The Conference of Paris, 1919 It was attended by representatives of all the Allied, but (contrary to international custom) by none of the defeated, Powers. A Council of Ten, containing two representatives of each of the five principal Powers—Britain, France, America, Italy, and Japan—did most of the work. But Japan was not concerned with Europe, and Italy withdrew.<sup>1</sup> Thus the real decisions rested with the three remaining Powers, in other words with the Big Three—President Wilson, Clemenceau (the French Premier), and Mr. Lloyd George. Wilson, an idealist and a visionary, with little conception of European problems, was bent on founding a new world order. Clemenceau's object was far simpler and more definite: he simply wished to punish Germany as much as possible. Mr. Lloyd George tried to hold the balance between these two. The result was an unsatisfactory compromise. Wilson got his League of Nations—his ideal—but Clemenceau insisted on the severest terms being imposed on Germany. The 'Fourteen Points' were abandoned.

The setting up for the first time in history of a League of Nations was a significant event. The defeated Powers were The League of Nations not at first admitted to the League, nor was Communist Russia. And unfortunately, America—traditionally hostile to European entanglements—refused to enter the League at Wilson's bidding; the Senate repudiated his action and he was defeated at the next Presidential election. Still, the

<sup>1</sup> President Wilson refused to recognize the Treaty of London (1915) by which France and Britain had promised Italy the Dalmatian coastline.

open covenants of Peace to be made, not secret treaties; the Freedom of the Seas, alike in peace and war;<sup>1</sup> removal of economic barriers between nations; reduction of armaments; adjustment of colonial claims; evacuation by Germany of the occupied portions of Russia, Belgium, and France. The fourteenth Point was the most important of all: it was that 'A general association of nations must be formed under specific covenants for the purpose of affording mutual guarantees of political independence and territorial integrity to great and small states alike'.

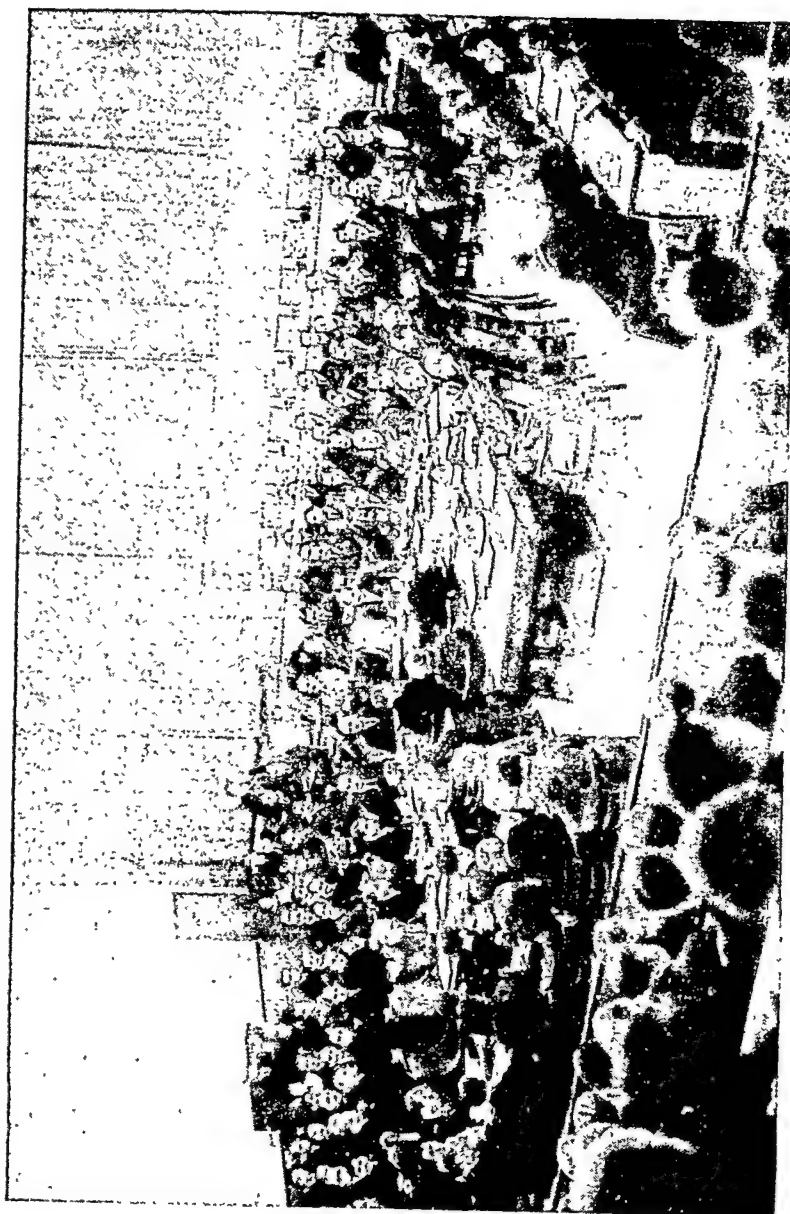
Collapse of  
Germany

The effect of the President's Notes to Germany on the German people was to make them long ardently for peace. They supposed—and so did the President—that they would be allowed to make peace on honourable terms, and that they would not be made the victims of a harsh treaty. Their military leaders, indeed, after having taken the initiative in demanding an armistice, were inclined to continue the struggle, and the German Army was still capable of fighting, if only it could be provided with supplies. But revolution was brewing at home, and no leader could force an unwilling people to continue a hopeless struggle. Then at this critical moment, the German Navy mutinied; at the same time Germany was deserted by the last of her allies, Austria. In this threatening situation the Kaiser abdicated and fled (9 November). The next day the Government sent plenipotentiaries to the Front, empowering them to sign an armistice, and to submit to whatever terms the Allies might impose. The military collapse of Austria was also followed by a revolution; the Emperor Karl abdicated, and the Hapsburg monarchy came to an end.

The  
Armistice  
11 Nov.  
1918

The Armistice with Germany was signed—in a railway carriage in a wood—on the night of 10–11 November. Its terms were: (i) Evacuation of all Allied territory within 14 days; evacuation of the left bank of the Rhine within 31 days. 5,000

<sup>1</sup> This was a favourite American project, and was aimed at the old British claim to search neutral shipping in time of war (which caused the Anglo-American war of 1812) as well as at the more recent German claim to *attack* neutral shipping. But Britain would not consider the suggestion; Mr. Lloyd George told Wilson, 'I could not accept the principle of the Freedom of the Seas . . . the English people will not look at it. On this point the nation is absolutely solid.'



A MEETING OF THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS AT GENEVA

machinery of the League was set up at Geneva, where permanent staff is always dealing with international problems and working for the general welfare.

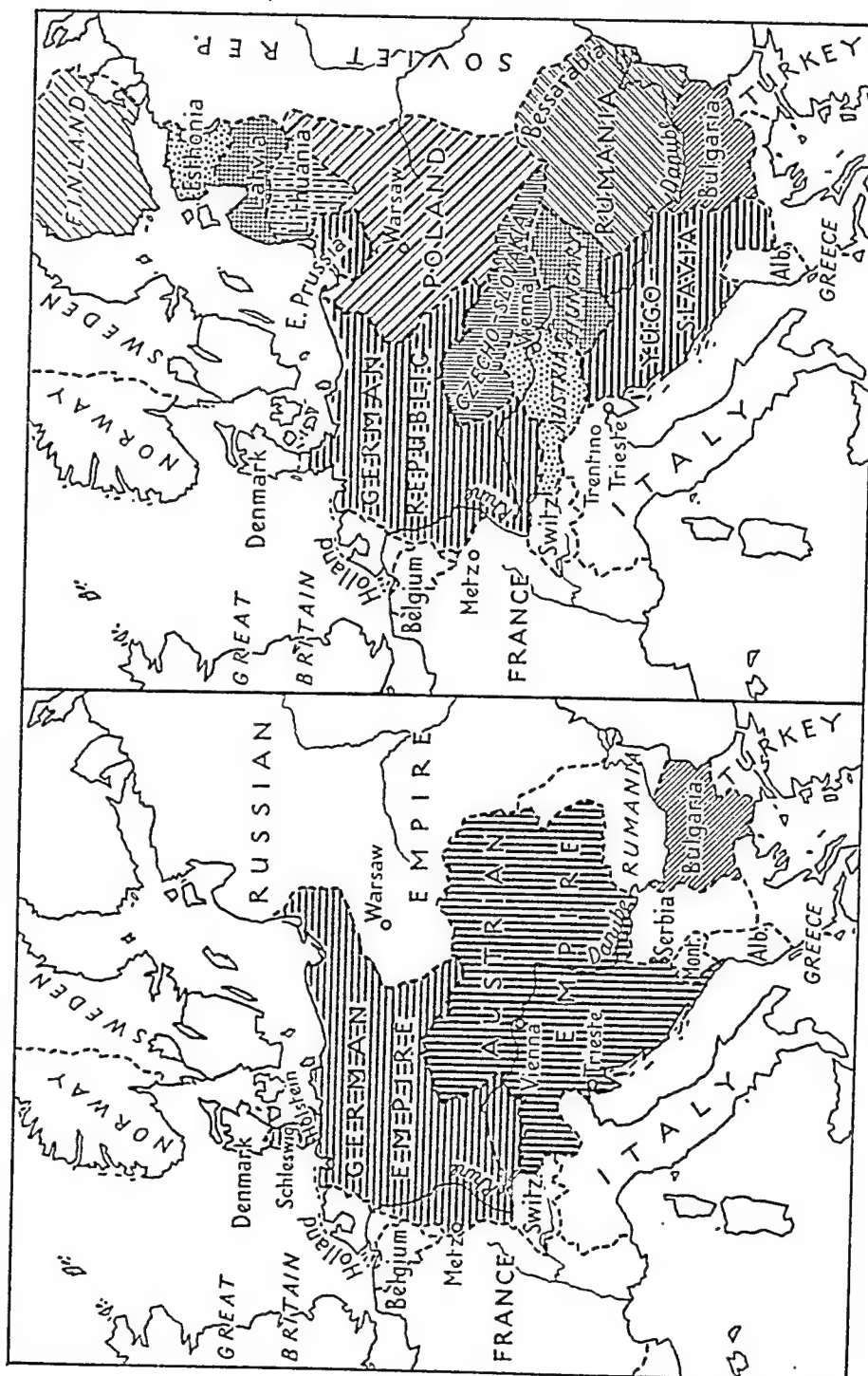
The  
Treaty of  
Versailles  
1919

The incorporation of the Covenant of the League of Nations in the peace treaty was the expression of the world's hope that the Great War would be the last war to be fought among civilized nations; but the treaty itself went far to falsify that hope. It was signed at Versailles, in the same Hall of Mirrors where Bismarck had triumphed over France nearly a century earlier. The Versailles settlement was imposed on a disarmed Germany, and was repudiated by that nation five years later, when the Germans had partially recovered their strength. 'A nation of seventy millions suffers but does not surrender,' remarked the German representative who signed the Armistice to Marshal Foch. ('Très bien!' replied Foch.)

But in 1919 the Germans could only submit. Their representatives were made to sign an admission that the ruin of Germany and Austria (in 1914) were solely responsible for the outbreak of the War—whereas its ultimate causes, as we have seen, are to be found in the military, political, colonial, and commercial rivalries which had characterized Europe during the previous generation. This 'war-guilt' clause was accepted by the Germans only under compulsion, and it was made the basis of the demand that Germany should make good the Allied losses. Fantastic reparations for damage inflicted were imposed, and the estimated cost ran into thousands of millions.<sup>1</sup> How such vast sums were ever to be paid, Allied financial experts did not attempt to explain. A large area of the Rhineland was to be occupied for a period of fifteen years. The coal-fields of the Saar Valley were given to France, and the territory in which they were situated alienated from Germany for a period of fifteen years. Large surrenders of territory were also demanded. Germany had to restore Alsace and Lorraine to France, and to surrender all her colonies—the lion's share of which went to the British Empire. The re-created state of Poland received large gains at the expense of Germany.

<sup>1</sup> The actual figures are not given, as they were constantly being altered and revised by various 'experts'. Reparations were never paid in full, and finally they were repudiated altogether by Germany.





ICI.



including (after a plebiscite) part of the rich coal-field of Silesia. The making of the new Poland cut off East Prussia—as before 1772—from Germany (see map) in order to restore to Poland a ‘corridor to the sea’. The Germans also lost (after another plebiscite) the northern part of Schleswig to Denmark.

In addition to these losses, Germany was made to disarm. She had already surrendered her fleet, and she was now obliged to reduce her army to a maximum strength of 100,000 men. This, the Allies solemnly promised, was to be the prelude to a general disarmament. They did not keep their promise. France was still too afraid of her ancient foe to disarm; Italy re-armed under the Fascist régime. As for the new states which the Allies set up in the east of Europe—Poland, Yugoslavia, and a greatly enlarged Rumania—they were all soon arming to the teeth. France encouraged the formation of a ring of armed states round Germany; she made treaties with Poland and the countries of the Little Entente—Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, and Rumania.

The  
question  
of Dis-  
armament

While Germany was thus punished, disarmed, and humiliated, the Austro-Hungarian Empire was partitioned. The breaking up of this old Empire (Treaty of St. Germain with Austria; Treaty of Trianon with Hungary) was necessary if, as the Allies believed, the principle of nationality or ‘self-determination’ was to be upheld. So Rumania took Transylvania from Hungary; Serbia (enlarged into the kingdom of Yugoslavia) took the southern Slav provinces; Italy took Trentino and Istria; and Poland took Galicia. This left the republic of Czechoslovakia,<sup>1</sup> Austria proper, and Hungary. But the last two named states, which were formed into separate republics, suffered badly. They were regarded as ‘enemy Powers’, whereas the Slav states were not. The frontiers<sup>2</sup> were everywhere drawn at the expense of Austria and Hungary. A similar policy was pursued in regard to Bulgaria, which had to give Bulgaria up her Aegean coast-line to Greece.

The break-  
up of  
Austria-  
Hungary

<sup>1</sup> Czechoslovakia was formed out of Bohemia, Moravia, and the Slovak part of Hungary.

<sup>2</sup> e.g. Italy was given the Brenner Pass; Czechoslovakia a Danube frontier. Both Yugoslavia and Rumania received larger portions of Austrian and Hungarian territory than was strictly just.

Eastern  
Europe

In Eastern Europe, the provinces of Russia which had been surrendered to Germany at the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk were made into independent republics (Finland, Esthonia, Latvia



THE NEAR EAST: 1923

After the treaties with Bulgaria and Turkey.

*Note:* Iraq became independent in 1932; Syria in 1936

Lithuania). Poland, after being submerged for a century, was pieced together again by the joining of the Polish provinces of Russia, Austria, and Germany.

Treaty of Sèvres 1920  
Turkey  
Peace was made with Turkey in 1920 (Treaty of Sèvres) on the basis of the surrender of all non-Turkish territory. Syria and Cilicia were to go to France, under a 'mandate' from the League of Nations; Iraq and Palestine were to go to Britain on similar terms. Constantinople and the straits (Dardanelles and Bosphorus) were to be under international control. Finally, Smyrna and part of the Anatolian coast were given to Greece.

The Turkish revival 1922  
This Treaty of Sèvres did not stand; it was overthrown by the wholly unexpected energy of Turkey—no longer a 'Sick Man'—under a brilliant and ruthless soldier named Mustafa

Kemal. He raised a Turkish army, swept down on the coast, burnt Smyrna, and drove the Greeks out of Asia. France retired from Cilicia, and a British force at Chanak, on the Straits, had to be withdrawn (1922). After this another treaty had to be made with the Turks (Treaty of Lausanne, 1923) by which they retained Constantinople (now re-named Istanbul) and its neighbourhood, and the whole of Asia Minor. They agreed, however, to abandon Syria, Palestine, and Iraq.<sup>1</sup> The new Turkey, unlike the old, contains few subject peoples.

Treaty of  
Lausanne  
1923

The German colonies were also disposed of under a system of 'mandates' from the League of Nations. These mandates were supposed to expire when the occupied territories should be deemed fit for self-government. This actually happened in the case of the ex-Turkish provinces of Iraq (1932) and Syria (1936); but the German colonies, being peopled by backward races, did not come in the same category. The German Pacific islands were divided between Australia, New Zealand, and Japan; the Union of South Africa took German South-West Africa; Britain and France divided Togoland and the Cameroons, and Britain received Tanganyika (German East Africa).

The  
German  
colonies

To sum up: the Great War ended with the collapse of the four great Empires of Russia, Austria-Hungary, Turkey, and Germany, and of these the Austro-Hungarian Empire disappeared from the map of Europe in 1919. The Treaty of Versailles imposed on Germany in 1919 was a startling contrast with the terms imposed on France in 1815. Germany, in 1919, was deprived of army and navy—intended as a step towards general disarmament—and of important territories and colonies, and she was loaded with impossible reparations and indemnities. The Treaties of 1919 and 1920 re-made the map of Europe. At the same time, the Treaty of Versailles set up the League of Nations, in the hope of preventing international conflicts in the future. Did these arrangements pacify Europe? The uneasy state of Europe during the post-war years supplies the answer.

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter XLIV.

5. *England: 1914-22*

Kitchener  
War  
Secretary  
1914-16

The first important act of the Asquith Ministry after outbreak of hostilities in 1914 was to appoint Lord Kitchener Secretary of State for War. The conqueror of Khartoum and the hero of the South African War was now an elderly man but his name had an almost magical significance for countrymen.<sup>1</sup> After the death of Lord Roberts (November 1914) Kitchener stood alone in his glory; he was the only figure of the war on the British side whose influence could be compared with Hindenburg's on the German. He was a very obstinate man and, later on, his advice was not always so good but in 1914 he was invaluable. In the first place he had the foresight to realize and the courage to declare that the War would last at least three years—not three months, as many people imagined. Secondly, he used his great influence to raise the Kitchener Armies, calling, in the first month, for 500,000 volunteers. These volunteers—there were more forthcoming in the following year—sufficed for England's needs till 1916.

Second  
Asquith  
(Coalition)  
Ministry  
1915-16

In May 1915 the Asquith Liberal Ministry was replaced by a Coalition Ministry under the same Premier, but including many Conservative leaders. Bonar Law, who had succeeded Balfour as leader of the Conservative party, became Colonial Secretary. Balfour himself went to the Admiralty. Mr. McKenna became Chancellor of the Exchequer in place of Mr. Lloyd George, who became head of a newly founded Ministry of Munitions. Mr. Lloyd George's appointment came not a moment too soon, for there was by now a very serious shortage of shells, especially high explosives, at the Front. Mr. Lloyd George accomplished wonders at the Ministry of Munitions, and, thanks largely to his work, the Army was well equipped with shells and guns for the rest of the War. The 'Big Gun Programme' was at first considered unnecessary by Kitchener, who said that we could

Mr. Lloyd  
George and  
Munitions

<sup>1</sup> The Cabinet was at first completely under his spell. At almost his first Cabinet, he told his colleagues that they must expect a long war, be prepared to put millions of men in the field, and maintain them for several years. All this must have fairly staggered the heads of a peace-loving nation; yet (says Mr. Winston Churchill in his account of the scene) 'these words were received by the Cabinet in silent assent' (*World Crisis*, i. 235.)

not man the guns if they were made; fortunately, Mr. Lloyd George got his way.<sup>1</sup>

Lord Kitchener had raised the strength of the British Army from seven divisions to seventy—a wonderful work; but by 1916 the limits of the voluntary system were reached. In that year the Government introduced a Conscription Bill, thereby sacrificing a great point of traditional English liberty to the pressing needs of the moment. There was a considerable opposition to the step, and the Home Secretary, Sir John Simon, resigned on this issue. Conscription raised the problem of conscientious objectors—those who opposed on religious or conscientious grounds the waging of war for any purpose whatsoever. Though Parliament provided for the exemption of such men from military service, many of them were imprisoned and harshly treated.

In the summer of 1916 Lord Kitchener was drowned on his way to Russia on board the *Hampshire*, which struck a mine and sank with practically all hands. Mr. Lloyd George took Kitchener's place at the War Office, but not for long. There was a growing impatience, especially among the Conservative members of the Cabinet, with Asquith's conduct of the War. His wise, judicial mind, admirable for making careful decisions in time of peace, was not suited to war conditions, which demand swift action. Mr. Lloyd George suggested to him the formation of a special War Cabinet (in addition to the ordinary Cabinet) with some other minister, not Asquith, as chairman. The suggestion was not well received, and, after some discussion, the War Secretary resigned. His resignation broke up the Government; Asquith resigned, and Mr. Lloyd George became Premier. He obtained the support of the bulk of the Conservatives, notably Bonar Law and Balfour, and of some of the Liberals, including Mr. Winston Churchill. But most of the Liberal ministers, including the Foreign Secretary, Sir

Conscrip-  
tion, 1916

Death of  
Kitchener  
1916

Lloyd  
George  
Ministry  
1916-22

<sup>1</sup> The Cabinet appointed a Committee to judge the merits of Mr. Lloyd George's proposals. A War Office spokesman stated his objections; Mr. Lloyd George did not trouble to state his case in reply. 'I suppose, sir,' said an official to him when the meeting was over, 'that means the end of your programme.' 'No,' said Mr. Lloyd George, 'it means the end of the Committee.' (Lloyd George, *War Memoirs*, ii. 561.)

Edward Grey, followed Asquith into exile. Balfour succeeded Grey at the Foreign Office.

**The War Cabinet** The new Premier at once devoted all his immense energy to the supreme task of winning the War. His first move was to set up the suggested War Cabinet, with himself as chairman. It proved to be a most efficient instrument, and was a considerable factor in the achievement of victory.<sup>1</sup> How victory was at length secured is told elsewhere.<sup>2</sup> Britain, nearly conquered by the submarine menace, cruelly bled on the Flanders battle-fields, attacked for the first time in history from the air, yet held on till the longed-for day of peace arrived. After the Armistice, a general election was held (1918) which confirmed the Lloyd George Government in power by an overwhelming majority. The Liberal and Labour Parties, which had the temerity to oppose the all-powerful Premier in the days of his triumph, were almost swept from the board; even Asquith lost his seat. On the Prime Minister now fell the major burden of negotiating peace on behalf of Great Britain; and for the next three years he was greatly occupied in attending European conferences—none of which had any considerable result—on questions arising out of the Peace Treaties.

**Representation of the People Act, 1918** The 1918 Parliament was elected on an almost universal suffrage. The Representation of the People Act (1918) gave the vote to all men over twenty-one and all women over thirty. The part played by women during the War had convinced most former opponents of women's suffrage that it would be unfair any longer to withhold the vote. The War, in fact, had precipitated a social revolution.<sup>4</sup> Nurses, lorry-drivers, munition-workers, farm labourers—practically every one except soldiers—women were now to be voters too.

**Period of economic distress begins 1920** The Coalition Ministry might reward its women supporters by giving them the vote; it was not so easy to reward the returning soldiers by a stroke of the pen. The Premier, mindful

<sup>1</sup> 'The most effective instrument for waging the war forged by any of the belligerents—except possibly the American Presidential autocracy.' (Cruttwell, *History of the War*.)

<sup>2</sup> See next chapter.

<sup>3</sup> Extended later, under Mr. Baldwin, to all women over twenty-one.

<sup>4</sup> See Chapter XLV.

of his earlier career as a social reformer, wished to make 'a land fit for heroes to live in'. It was not easy to do so. The whole world was still staggering from the effects of the War, and upset by the vast financial operations which the War had involved. It was not yet perceived that British foreign trade was entering upon a period of decline, and that this fact would necessarily involve hardship at home. Nor were the economic difficulties of Europe fully grasped. It was too readily assumed that the delicate system of international credit would recover quickly from the shock of the War. Instead, aggravated as it was by the burden of war debts and reparations, the situation steadily grew worse. In 1920 the trade decline in Britain began; unemployment grew more and more serious. In 1921 'unemployment benefit' had to be extended so as to cover practically all industries. Meanwhile the Labour Party was actively demanding a thorough re-casting of the industrial system on Socialistic lines. The workers, disappointed that peace had not brought plenty, were in an angry mood. There was a railway strike in 1919, and a coal strike in 1921. The industrial situation was back at the deadlock of 1913.

The Government had meanwhile alienated first the Liberals and then the Conservatives by its Irish policy,<sup>2</sup> and incurred general mistrust by the failure of its Near Eastern policy—the revolt of Turkey followed by the withdrawal of the British troops from Chanak—related above. Trade, instead of improving, was getting steadily worse. The bright hopes of 1918 were gone. In these circumstances it was not surprising that the Ministry lost favour. The Conservatives decided to break up the Coalition; they left the Government, and Mr. Lloyd George resigned (1922). His place was taken by Bonar Law at the head of a purely Conservative Government.

The Lloyd George Ministry had, in its six years of office, brought the country successfully through the second half of the Great War, made peace with Germany, solved the Irish problem, and settled the future of India.<sup>3</sup> It had also carried out the largest extension of the franchise in our history. It would be difficult to name any other Ministry in British history which

Resigna-  
tion of  
Lloyd  
George  
1922

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 945.

<sup>2</sup> See next section.

<sup>3</sup> See below, p. 1010.

was called upon to face such tremendous issues in so short a space of time.

### 6. *Ireland: 1914-22*

**Ireland 1914** In 1914 the Home Rule Bill was on the Statute Book, though its operation had been held up by the threat of civil war between Ulster and the South. When the European war broke out, the Asquith Government judged it best to suspend the Home Rule Act for the duration of the War, which, it was then supposed, would be short. And at first it seemed that the War had quietened even Irish quarrels. Thousands of Irishmen enlisted in the army. Unfortunately the English authorities were suspicious of these volunteers; the War Office refused to draft them into purely Irish regiments. Gradually the old hatred of England revived. Then, in 1916, when neither the end of the War nor Home Rule looked any nearer, a rebellion was planned.

**The Easter Rebellion 1916** The Irish Rebellion was the work of a revolutionary society called Sinn Feiners or 'Ourselves Alone' (founded, 1904, by Arthur Griffith) which had recently gained ground rapidly, and which aimed at the establishment of an Irish Republic. Negotiations were opened with Germany; Sir Roger Casement, a republican leader, was captured by the English, after being landed at Tralee by a German submarine, and executed. But the rebellion broke out in Easter Week (1916) in Dublin. It was a failure; the English Government struck quickly and arrested some of the leaders. These men were tried and executed—so, too, were some of their followers, mere boys for the most part. It was the savage punishment of these young men—the martyrs of Easter Week—that turned nearly all southern Ireland to Sinn Fein. At the end of 1916 the prospects of English government in Ireland were worse than at any time since the Union of 1800.

The state of Irish opinion was shown at the end of the War. When the General Election was held in 1918, the old Irish Nationalist party was swept out of existence. **Sinn Fein in control 1918** Sinn Fein took its place, which meant that a majority of Irishmen outside Ulster were in favour of a republic. The leaders of Sinn Fein, Arthur Griffith and Michael Collins, soon showed that they



meant business. They set up a republican government in Ireland and ignored the British authorities altogether. All who dared to deal with the English were liable to be shot by their own countrymen. The Sinn Féin members refused to take their place in the Westminster Parliament; a native Parliament, called Dail Eireann, was set up at Dublin.

The British Ministry offered to establish two separate governments in Ireland, with two Parliaments, at Dublin and Belfast. This offer was accepted by Ulster,<sup>1</sup> and the Belfast Parliament was opened by King George V in person (1921). But in the rest of Ireland, where British authority was entirely repudiated, it was a question of withdrawing from the country altogether, or of trying to put down the Irish Republic by force. The latter method was tried first. An auxiliary force, known from the colour of its uniform as the Black and Tans, was recruited to help the police, already sorely harassed. The Black and Tans, mostly English ex-officers inured to the hardships and horrors of war, committed many acts of violence and terrorism in Ireland; soon the whole country was in an appalling state of anarchy. While a state of war existed between the Irish Republican Army and the Black and Tans, the condition of the Irish people, especially in lonely country districts, was miserable in the extreme. Every night, thousands of people slept under hedges,<sup>2</sup> because they dared not sleep at home for fear of being dragged from their beds and murdered.

At length the Lloyd George Government, moved by the anger of its Liberal supporters, and by strong protests from America, decided to reverse its policy. It would, of course, have been possible to re-conquer Ireland, but only at a terrible cost. Mr. Lloyd George induced the Irish leaders to meet him and negotiate a settlement. A treaty was signed (December 1921) by the British ministers (both Liberals and Conservatives) and by Arthur Griffith and Michael Collins. It was agreed to set up an *Irish Free State*, excluding Ulster, with the status of a British Dominion within the Empire. But when Collins and his colleagues got back to Ireland, they found that

<sup>1</sup> Ulster members still, however, sat in the Westminster Parliament in order to maintain a close connexion with Britain.

<sup>2</sup> *The Times*, 30 Nov. 1920.

The Belfast  
Parliament  
1921

The Black  
and Tans

The Irish  
Treaty  
1921

an extreme party, led by Eamon de Valera, would not ratify the treaty. The two points of grievance were the exclusion of Ulster and the denial of full republican rights. Mr. de Valera put himself at the head of the Republicans, and another civil war broke out (1922-3) between Republicans and Free-Staters. Eventually—but not until after Collins and other leading Irishmen had been killed—the Free-Staters won. An Irish Free State was set up according to the terms of the treaty, with Mr. Cosgrave as its first President. With the withdrawal of British troops and officials, Ireland, for the first time in modern history, began the experiment of governing herself.

Irish Civil  
War  
1922-3

# DATE SUMMARY: THE WORLD CRISIS (1905-22)

## HOME AFFAIRS

## FOREIGN AND IMPERIAL

## THE LIBERAL REFORMERS (1905-14)

1905-8 Campbell-Bannerman Ministry	1903 AEROPLANES (America)
1908-15 First Asquith Ministry	1906 Algeciras Conference
1909 THE PEOPLE'S BUDGET	1908 First Bosnian crisis
1910 Budget and Lords crisis	1909 Blériot flies Channel
Two General Elections	1910 UNION OF SOUTH AFRICA
Edward VII <i>d.</i>	
1910-36 George V	
1911 PARLIAMENT ACT	1911 Agadir crisis
National Health Insurance	
1911-14 Home Rule Bill	
1912 Coal Strike	1912 Capt. Scott at South Pole
	1912-13 Balkan Wars
1914 Irish crisis	1914 (July) Second Bosnian crisis
1914 (August) Outbreak of the Great War	

## ASQUITH'S WAR MINISTRIES (1914-16)

1914 Kitchener War Sec.	1914 B.E.F. in France
	✕ MONS
	✕ MARNE
1915-16 Second Asquith (Coalition) Ministry	1915 Gallipoli
1916 Conscription Act	1916 Verdun and the Somme
Easter Rebellion (Ireland)	
Kitchener <i>d.</i>	

## LLOYD GEORGE (1916-22)

1916 (Dec.) Coalition Ministry formed	1917 RUSSIAN REVOLUTION
	America enters the War
	Lenin in power
1918 Representation of the People Act (Woman Suffrage)	1918 Treaty of Brest-Litovsk
	President Wilson's Fourteen Points
	Montague-Chelmsford Report (India)
1918 (Nov.) Armistice ends the Great War	
1918 Sinn Féin controls Ireland	1919 TREATY OF VERSAILLES
	League of Nations
	India Act
	1920 Treaty of Sèvres (Turkey)
1921 IRISH FREE STATE	1922 Turkish revival

## XLIII A THE GREAT WAR

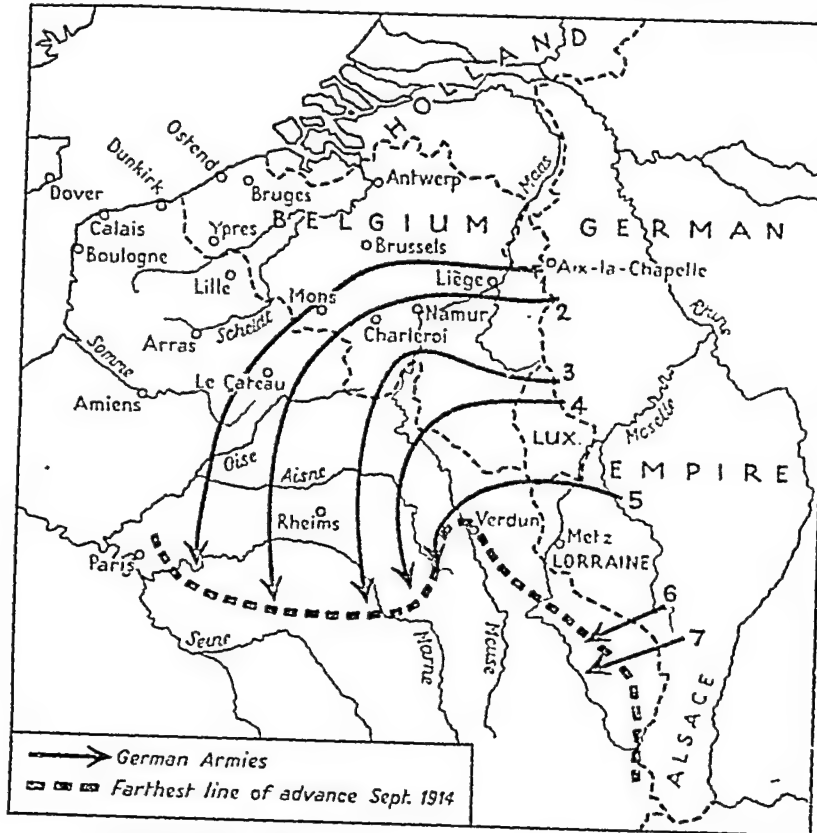
### I. *The German Offensive, 1914*

<sup>1914.</sup>  
<sup>The</sup>  
<sup>German</sup>  
<sup>invasion</sup>  
<sup>(Aug.)</sup> THE plans of the German General Staff in 1914 were based on attacking and overwhelming France before her Russian ally, hampered by long distances and poor communications, could make an effective entry into the war. Leaving, therefore, only a comparatively small force to hold the Russian frontier, the Germans brought against France one and a half million men divided into seven armies. It was not expected that the 'contemptible little army'—as the Kaiser was said to have called Sir John French's force of five divisions (90,000 men)—would make any serious difference. Nor was it anticipated that the Belgians would do anything beyond making a formal protest against the violation of their neutrality.

The French plan was to break the advancing German armies in two by a thrust towards Lorraine and Luxemburg. This battle of the Frontiers (15-25 August) was a ghastly failure; it cost France 300,000 men, or nearly 25 per cent. of her combatants. Meanwhile the German plan materialized. It was this. The German right was to swing round, encircle the French, and bring about the destruction or surrender of their main armies (see map, p. 977). The destruction of the French armies was a more important objective than the taking of any town, and that is why the Germans persisted in it rather than enter Paris, which a few weeks later lay at their mercy. To begin with, all went according to plan. The Belgian fortress, Liège, held the Germans up for forty-eight hours, but this did not seriously affect their time-table; and von Kluck, commanding the German 1st Army, entered Brussels on 20 August. The whole country unwillingly submitted to the conqueror; thousands of Belgian refugees fled to England.

Since the main French forces under General Joffre had been concentrated south-east of Belgium, there was little to oppose the advance of von Kluck and von Bülow (1st and 2nd Armies) across the Franco-Belgian frontier. The advancing

Germans encountered the French (under General Lanrezac) at Mons, Charleroi, and the British at Mons and Le Cateau. The delaying actions fought at these places (23-25 August) could not stem the overwhelming force of the invasion. The German 1st,



THE GERMAN ATTACK IN FRANCE AND BELGIUM (1914)

2nd, and 3rd Armies reached the Marne; the 1st Army was within twenty miles of Paris. About half a million people fled from the capital, and the French government moved to Bordeaux. At the Front, the French left swung back, and the British Army with it. The British suffered 15,000 casualties in this retreat,<sup>1</sup> but, at the end of it, they were still a force

<sup>1</sup> Von Kluck, who was a generous enemy, spoke after the War of the B.E.F. as 'an incomparable army'.

to be reckoned with. Presently they took up their positions in the line of battle which turned and faced the Germans.

The German plan for the envelopment of the French armies was now clear. It did not succeed, partly because the German army commanders failed to keep in touch with one another and were badly directed by von Moltke at Head-quarters,<sup>1</sup> and partly because Joffre acted in the nick of time. Undismayed by the disasters which had already taken place, this great commander rallied his men behind the line of the Marne (map), protecting Paris. The battle of the Marne (6-13 September), in which the British took part, stopped the German advance, and has been well called one of the decisive battles of the world. By 13 September the Germans had been thrust back to the line of the Aisne; from there, however, all efforts to dislodge them failed. The war on this front came to a standstill; how long the standstill was to last, no one could then foresee.

<sup>Battle of the Marne (Sept.)</sup> After the failure of the first German plan, von Moltke was dismissed, and von Falkenhayn took his place. Falkenhayn's plan, put into operation in October and November, was to seize the Channel ports—Dunkirk, Calais, and Ostend, and so upset the communications between France and England. The

<sup>The race to the sea (Oct.)</sup> Germans were at first held up by the Belgian defence of Antwerp (28 Sept.-9 Oct.), in which city the Belgian king, government, and main army were holding out. Mr. Winston Churchill insisted on sending (and accompanying) a force of marines to assist in the defence of Antwerp; if he could have had his way sooner, much might have been done. As it was, the British force was too small, and came too late; Antwerp was taken on 9 October. The Belgian army fell back behind the Yser, but most of the British marines were forced into Holland, where they were interned.

<sup>Antwerp</sup>

The Allies, who had been persistently trying to outflank the German right wing, were finally forced to a defensive line, running due north and south from the sea to the Somme, and covering Ypres, Armentières, and Arras. The British Army, moved from the Aisne, defended the two former places. The

<sup>1</sup> His G.H.Q., at Luxemburg, was much too far in the rear for him to keep control. This criticism might be applied to other G.H.Q.s later in the War, e.g. the British during the battle of Passchendaele.

first battle of Ypres, which lasted three weeks (21 Oct.—11 Nov.), saw some of the fiercest fighting of the War. The old British Army practically ceased to exist after Ypres; our casualties were 50,000. But the Germans, in spite of tremendous attacks made with the utmost devotion, could not break through. The famous Ypres Salient, the grave of tens of thousands of British soldiers, guarded the wrecked city, which sentiment now forbade we should give up.

As winter set in that first November of the War, the battle came to a standstill in the north as it had already done on the Aisne. The result was that the trenches into which the troops dug themselves that winter became a permanent line, stretching from Switzerland to the sea. No one then foresaw that the ensuing trench warfare was to last four years. The line itself was not of our choosing, for it left one-tenth of France and almost the whole of Belgium in the hands of the enemy (see map, p. 996). This gave the Germans the great industrial city of Lille, besides four-fifths of the French coal-fields, and nine-tenths of their iron supply.

On the Eastern Front, the Russians were ready for action sooner than von Moltke had anticipated; during August they penetrated far into East Prussia. To stop their advance, a retired German general, and a native of East Prussia, von Hindenburg, was put in charge, with General Ludendorff as his Chief of Staff. The partnership of Hindenburg and Ludendorff, which lasted till the end of the War, was among the most famous in military annals, and nearly won the War for Germany. It was Ludendorff who caused the encirclement of the second of the two Russian armies in East Prussia at Tannenberg (30 August) where 120,000 prisoners were taken. This was by far the greatest victory of 1914, and it was followed by the driving of the other Russian army from East Prussia. Having cleared his native soil of the enemy, Hindenburg later (November) began the invasion of Russian Poland. The Russian casualties in this campaign amounted to 300,000 men.

The Austrians, however, fared badly. Twice they invaded Serbia, and both times they were driven back with loss. The southern Russian armies advanced into Galicia (Austrian

Poland) and took Lemberg, the fourth city of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Only the intervention of the Germans saved Austria from further defeats. But the Germans had a new ally. At the end of October, Turkey declared war on Britain and her allies. Russia was now effectively cut off from the Mediterranean—and from western help. Further, Turkish enmity involved a threat to Egypt—which country was forthwith annexed to the British Empire for the duration of the war—and possibly to India, through the Persian Gulf. To counter these threats, the British campaigns in Palestine and Mesopotamia were shortly afterwards begun.

**Turkey at war (Oct.)** At sea, the superiority of the British Fleet compelled the Germans to shut themselves up behind their defences at Heligoland, the Kiel Canal, and the Baltic. Mine-fields guarded the approaches to the German coast. But several German cruisers were on the high seas at the outbreak of the War. Of these the *Goeben* and *Breslau* took refuge in Turkish waters—before Turkey declared war. The *Emden* steamed about the Pacific and did much damage to British shipping; she was eventually sunk by the *Sidney*, a cruiser of the Australian Navy. Admiral von Spee, with a small squadron, sank two British ships and a *Coronel*, off the coast of Chile, only to meet his fate when he attempted to enter the harbour of Port Stanley in the Falkland Islands. **Naval affairs** Admiral Sturdee, with a greatly superior force, was waiting for him. The German admiral's ship was sunk with all hands; of his remaining ships all except one were sunk or wrecked (December).

**Battle of the Falkland Isles (Dec.)** One result of the British command of the sea was that the Germans were unable to send aid to their colonies, all of which, except German East Africa, were captured during the first few months of the War. French and British forces took Togoland and the Cameroons in West Africa; a South African army, led by Generals Botha and Smuts, overran German South-West Africa. The Japanese, who had joined the Allies (under the terms of the Anglo-Japanese Treaty of 1902) took Kiau-Chau in China, and some German Pacific islands. New Zealand accounted for Samoa, and the Australians for German New Guinea. Only in East Africa the Germans put up a stout resistance, which lasted till 1917.

**Conquest of the German colonies**



2. *Gallipoli and Salonika, 1915*

The year 1915 was remarkable for the German conquest of 1915 Poland and Serbia; for the unsuccessful but heroic British adventure in Gallipoli; and for stalemate on the Western Front.

The great German drive against the Russian armies in Poland began on 1 May. The German and Austrian armies, under the supreme command of General Mackensen, broke through the Russian front in Galicia.<sup>1</sup> The Russians were demoralized by the terrific bombardment which preceded the attack, and soon they were in rapid retreat. All Galicia was cleared by the end of June, and it was no longer possible for the Russians to hold the Polish salient. Warsaw, the Polish capital, fell on 4 August; Brest-Litovsk, an important railway centre, by the end of the month. The conquest of Lithuania followed; and by the end of the campaign the Russian armies were holding a line running from Riga to the Rumanian frontier (map, p. 988).

The  
Russian  
retreat  
(May-  
Sept.)

The Russians had lost a vast territory, and suffered about two million casualties—half of them prisoners of war. The Tsar dismissed the Grand Duke Nicholas from the supreme command of the Russian armies, which he took over himself. The dismissal of the Grand Duke was probably due to the Tsarina, now under the spell of the monk Rasputin, whose sinister influence was destined to hasten the fall of the Russian monarchy. The disintegration of Russia had now gone too far, however, for any one man to stay its course. Organization was altogether lacking; the condition of the army was wretched beyond description. Recruits were sent to the Front after four weeks training, usually without having seen a rifle. Often the reserve troops were massed behind the battle line, waiting unarmed till they could get a rifle from the wounded or dead; often the Germans found their wretched opponents armed only with clubs. It was in such conditions that the soldiers of the Tsar faced the most highly organized, the most efficient, the best armed and the best led army in the world in 1915.

Condition  
of the  
Russian  
Army

To counter this great German stroke, the western Allies could do nothing that year. An attempt was made to strike

<sup>1</sup> On the Dunajec, a tributary of the Vistula.

The Dar-  
danelles

Gallipoli  
(April)

down the Turkish Empire, open up the Black Sea, and so into touch with Russia; had this object been realized, the would soon have been ended. The scheme was to attack the Dardanelles and so approach the Turkish capital. The attempt to force the entrance to the famous Straits was made in March from the sea, and ended in complete failure. In April a landing was made at the extreme end of the Gallipoli peninsula by troops under cover of naval artillery fire. Twenty-five thousand men, under Sir Ian Hamilton's command, were landed on six beaches. But the landing was useless unless the Turks could be pushed from their trenches on the slopes above and driven from Achi Baba, the dominating hill on the south of the peninsula, overlooking the Dardanelles. In spite of the magnificent heroism of the attacking troops, this purpose was never achieved.

Suvla Bay  
(Aug.)

In August a second landing was made at Suvla Bay. Men advanced through the most difficult country, and climbed up precipitous cliffs, in the face of the enemy fire. But, their comrades farther south, they failed to take the heights above the bay, in spite of feats of endurance and heroism seldom, if ever, surpassed in the annals of war. A few thousand extra troops—such as were uselessly squandered six weeks later at Loos in Flanders—might have turned the scale. As it was, Lord Kitchener decided on evacuation, which took place at the end of December 1915 and in the first days of the New Year. The physical perfection of the young soldiers who sacrificed themselves in this adventure impressed all observers. The very flower of the British and Anzac<sup>1</sup> armies perished on those cruel hill-sides, under the hot Mediterranean sky. And, in one of the islands of the Aegean, died Rupert Brooke, the soldier-poet who had gone so gladly to the war.

Evacuation  
(Dec.)

Italy  
at war  
(May)

Meanwhile Italy had agreed to declare war on her former ally but older enemy, Austria. By the Treaty of London (April 1915) France and Britain promised Italy the Brenner Pass (in the Alps), the peninsula of Istria, and the Dalmatian coast-line<sup>2</sup> in the event of the Allies winning the war, and as the price of Italian aid. So another battle-line was formed

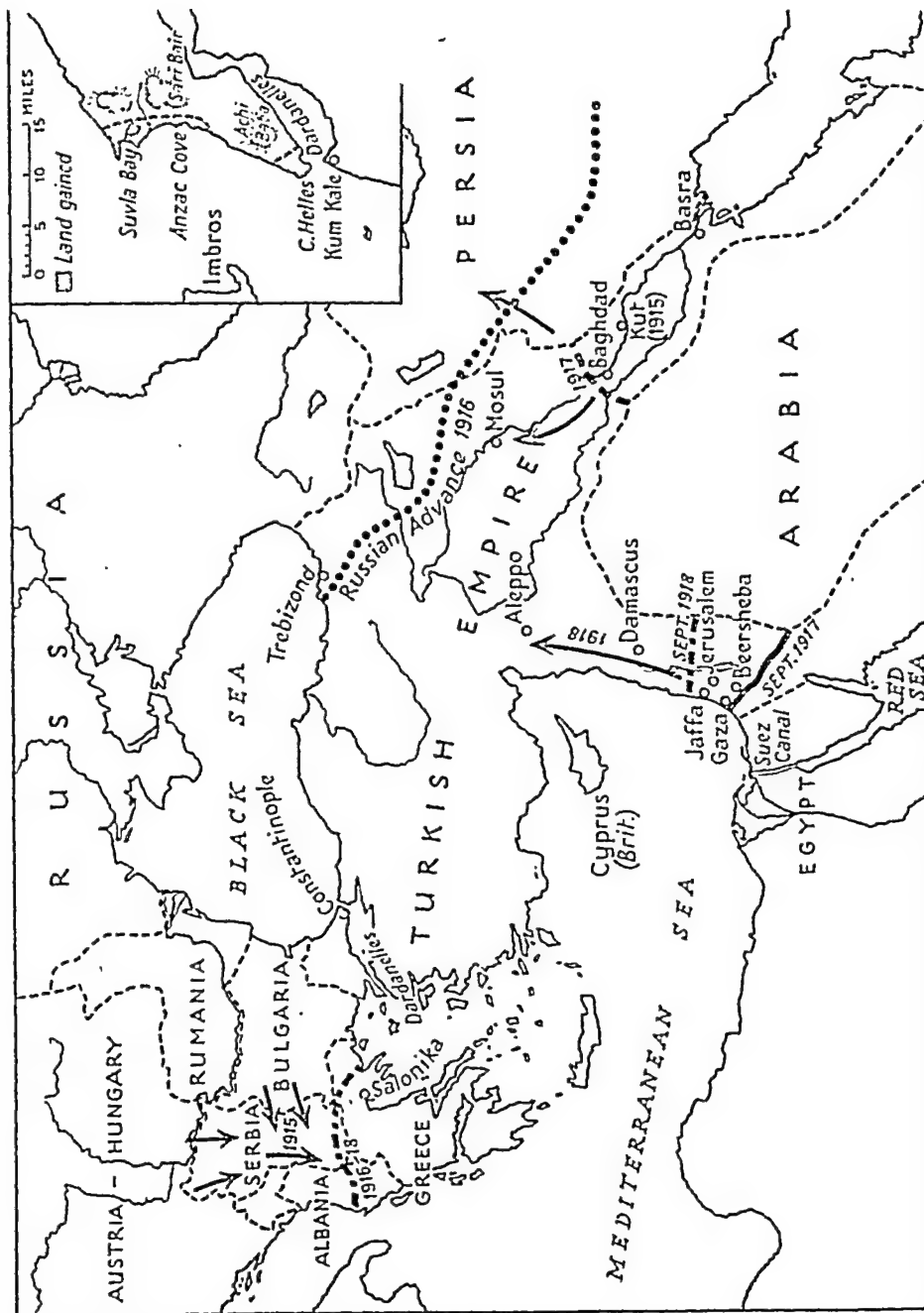
<sup>1</sup> Australia and New Zealand Army Corps.

<sup>2</sup> Italy did not get the Dalmatian coast-line in 1919, however.



GALLIPOLI, 1915

A view of North Beach, with an Australian hospital in the foreground



along the Austro-Italian frontier. This extension of the War did not, however, have the desired result—the immediate collapse of Austria. On the contrary, Austria was able to send to the Italian front some of her Slav troops, who would not fight against Russia, but who would fight against Italy.

The failure to force the Dardanelles and the plight of the Russian armies did not fill the cup of the Allies' misfortunes; the third tragedy of 1915 was the tragedy of Serbia. Serbia's neighbours, Bulgaria and Greece, were neutrals at the beginning of this year. A little more resolution on the part of the Allies would probably have persuaded Greece, and possibly Bulgaria also, to join their side. In Greece, the Premier, Venizelos, wished to join the Allies, and it was he who arranged for them to land their armies at Salonika. For this he was dismissed by the king, Constantine, who steadily refused to abandon his neutrality. His sympathies were with Germany, but fear of the British fleet prevented his joining the other side. But Bulgaria signed a secret treaty with Germany, and the Russians precipitated war by an ultimatum (October). War against Bulgaria, by all the Allied Powers, followed. But neither the Western Allies nor the Russians were ready to push troops into the Balkans. The Germans and Austrians, on the other hand, were quite ready. Led by the redoubtable Mackensen, they invaded Serbia from the north, while the Bulgarians invaded it from the east; practically the whole country was conquered (November). The remnants of the Serbian Army fled over the mountains into Albania; 100,000 Serbian soldiers were afterwards rescued on the Adriatic coast by the British and Italian navies.

Serbia,  
Greece,  
and  
Bulgaria

Bulgaria  
at war  
(Oct.)

Conquest  
of Serbia  
(Nov.)

After the conquest of Serbia, the Germans halted and made no attempt to reach Salonika. The Franco-British Army, which had come too late on the scene to save Serbia, was now drawn up on a line north of Salonika, roughly along the Graeco-Serbian frontier. There it remained for three years.

The  
Salonika  
Front

On the Western Front the year 1915 saw the establishment of that dreary trench warfare which was to characterize most of the long struggle. The Germans attempted to break through the Ypres Salient (second battle of Ypres, February) where they used poison gas. But in spite of this new horror, Ypres

The  
Western  
Front

was held, though the Salient was narrowed to a radius of less than two miles from the city. Two attempts were made by the British to break through the German line; both failed. The first was at Neuve Chapelle (February); the second at Loos (September). The British losses at Loos were 60,000 men killed and wounded; the gains, a small piece of ground of no value. Shortly afterwards Sir John French was relieved of his command, and his place taken by Sir Douglas Haig.

In 1915 the Germans developed their submarine campaign, and in February they sank without warning the large British liner, the *Lusitania*; 1,198 persons, including 100 Americans, were drowned. It was expected that, after this outrage America would declare war, but President Wilson was still determined not to abandon his country's traditional neutrality which had been maintained for a hundred years.

### 3. Verdun and the Somme, 1916

1916. Falkenhayn decided that a strong German attack on the Western Front must be made early in 1916. He believed that a protracted battle on a large scale would wear down the French morale, and that the French were incapable of offering prolonged resistance. He selected the line opposite Verdun for this attack, and it was here that he hoped France would bleed to death. The attack was launched in February, and the battle continued without intermission until July. The French lost a few forts and a good deal of ground; but they held on tenaciously to the great fortress, which became a symbol of the very soul of France. The losses on both sides were terrible; but the spirit of France was not broken.

Russian and Italian offensives Relief came from France's allies. First the Russians, in the very last effort of which they were capable, renewed their offensive against Austria, and made a considerable advance in Galicia, taking 300,000 prisoners. The Germans had to hurry troops across to the East to the relief of their ally. The Italians, too, made an attack on Austria at the Isonzo<sup>1</sup> Front; they failed to reach Trieste, but took Gorizia.

The main burden, however, fell on Great Britain, which

<sup>1</sup> The river forming the Austro-Italian boundary in Venetia.

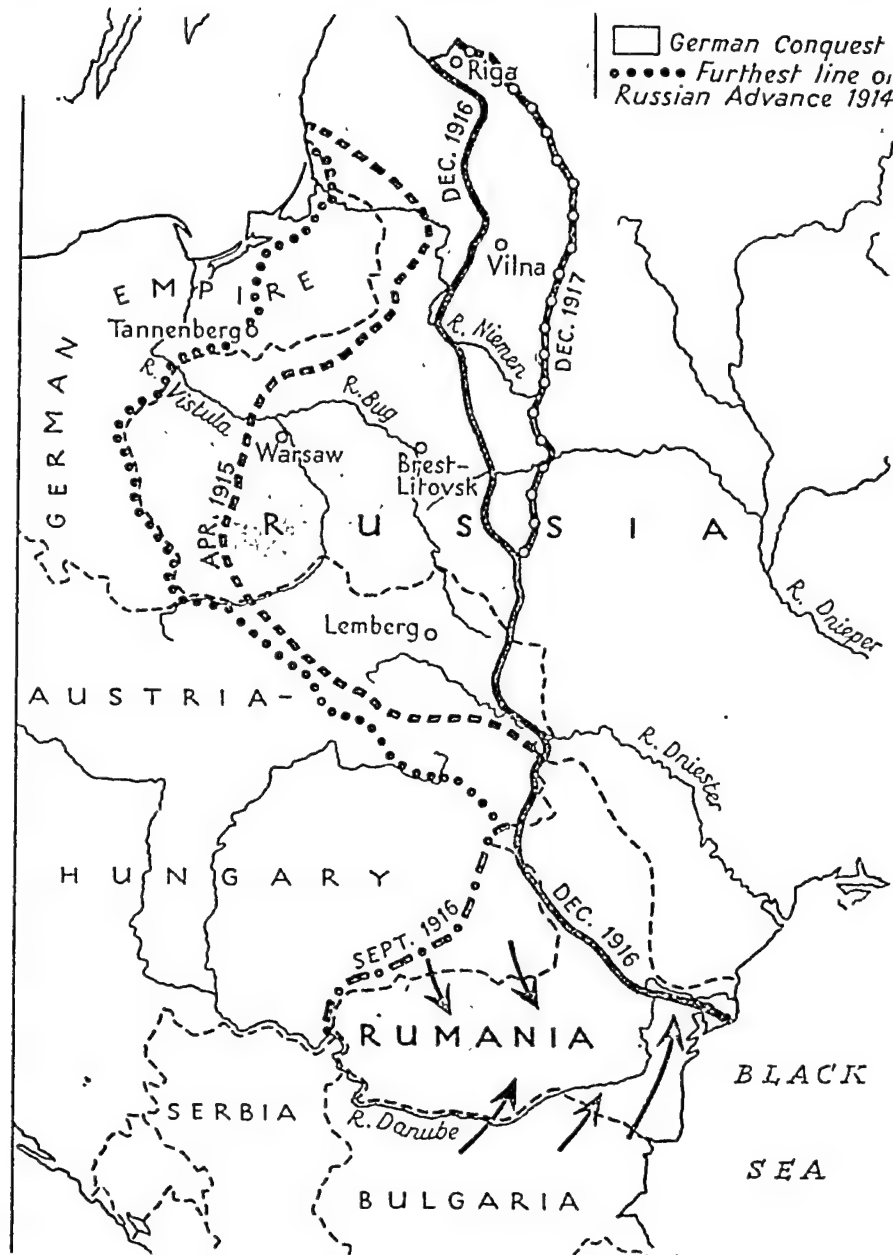
was now prepared, for the first time in the War, to take a principal part in the campaign in France. The supply of shells, thanks to Mr. Lloyd George's efforts,<sup>1</sup> was now adequate; the New Armies, raised since 1914, were ready to play a major part in the great conflict. The flower of Britain's manhood, drawn from all ranks of civil life, was cast into the furnace of this battle, which lasted from July to November, 1916. The Somme was the area selected for the attack, and the French were to assist by an offensive south of the river. After a terrific artillery bombardment, the attack was launched on 1 July; the casualties were appalling, the ground gained in the first week, small in extent. But, week after week, the attack was renewed. The whole area was reduced to a desert by shell fire. Villages became unrecognizable heaps of bricks, woods mere stumps of trees like broken telegraph poles. Yet the names of these devastated places—Thiepval, Fricourt, Mametz, Delville Wood—were on the front page of every British newspaper; the tortured earth was fought for over and over again, yard by yard. The last attack was made in the middle of November on the Ancre (a tributary of the Somme), and resulted in the capture of Beaucourt and Beaumont-Hamel. After that the rain and the mud made further advance impossible. The British casualties were 400,000; the German not so many. Many critics believe that Haig should not have persisted in this terrible attack, made at the cost of so many gallant lives, and resulting in so little gain. Certainly, the Germans also suffered heavily, and that winter they secretly withdrew from the Somme trenches to a prepared position, some miles behind, known as the Hindenburg Line.<sup>2</sup> The positions are shown on the map (p. 996).

The Battle  
of the  
Somme  
(July-  
Nov. 1916)

In August 1916 Rumania was induced to enter the war on the side of the Allies. It was not expected that the Germans, after their efforts at Verdun and on the Somme, would be capable of further offensives that year—but here the Allies made a profound mistake. The Rumanians were full of quite

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 968.

<sup>2</sup> Falkenhayn had been dismissed from the supreme command of the German armies that summer, and his place taken by Hindenburg and Ludendorff, in joint command.



THE DEFEAT OF RUSSIA AND RUMANIA

unjustified confidence, and expected to advance into Hungary but the Russians were unable, and even unwilling, to render any assistance. In the event, the greater part of Rumania wa



overrun by German armies under Falkenhayn and Mackensen ; by December the Rumanians were thoroughly beaten. Three-quarters of the country, including the capital, Bucharest, was in the hands of the enemy. Downfall of Rumania (Nov.-Dec.)

The downfall of Rumania was a bitter and entirely unexpected blow for the Allies ; with Russia on the verge of collapse, the Central Powers were supreme in Eastern Europe. In the East, too, the Turks had brought about the surrender of a British army at Kut (April), and the British advance into Mesopotamia was thus checked. In Palestine little advance had been made, but there the organization of the Arab Revolt against Turkey had begun under Colonel Lawrence. This was the beginning of the Turkish downfall. Kut  
Lawrence in Arabia

At sea, the main battle of the War was fought this year. On 31 May 1916 Admiral Beatty, with an advance squadron of battle cruisers, sighted the enemy under Admiral Hipper, and engaged him. Beatty suffered heavily, and lost three ships. But behind Beatty was the main British fleet (Admiral Sir John Jellicoe), and behind Hipper the German fleet under Admiral Scheer. Both fleets were drawn into the action ; had that action been fought to a finish, the immense superiority of the British in numbers and gun-power would probably have inflicted a severe defeat on Germany. But dusk was falling as the two fleets came into contact, and the Germans made good their escape, aided by a torpedo attack. When dawn came, they had disappeared. They had inflicted more damage than they had suffered, and got away with their main fleet intact. Jutland (May)

#### 4. *The Submarines and America, 1917*

After their failure to break the French armies at Verdun, the Germans determined, in 1917, to aim a terrible blow at Britain. The weapon chosen was the submarine. Attacks on British shipping had been continuous throughout the War, but on 1 February 1917 it was announced that 'unrestricted' submarine warfare would begin. This meant that the British Isles would be put in a state of blockade, and that *any* ship, merchant, neutral, or even hospital, would be sunk at sight. It was obvious that this high-handed programme might cause America to declare war, but it was hoped that her intervention 1917  
The submarine menace

would come too late to save Britain. This plan very nearly succeeded; how nearly, the British public was not, at the time, allowed to know. The first four months of 1917 showed alarming increase in our shipping losses. April was the worst of all; in that month 875,000 tons of shipping were sunk. For six weeks corn supply remained in the country, and, though the public did not know it, official circles believed that November would see the absolute limit of British endurance.<sup>1</sup>

The  
convoy  
system

The credit of saving the life of Britain at this critical hour belongs almost entirely to Mr. Lloyd George, Prime Minister since the previous December. He suggested that the experiment of convoys should be tried, although the Admiralty declared up to the last moment that a convoy system was impossible.<sup>2</sup> But the Premier insisted; convoys were tried, with surprising results. The merchant ships were found, contrary to expectation, to be quite capable of keeping in touch with their armed escort, without collision; and the escort proved capable of warding off the submarines. The Navy, prior to this test, worked wonders; by the end of the War, it had convoyed 88,000 vessels with a loss of only 436. By Christmas 1917, the danger had passed; the figures of sunken ships for the last quarter of the year was little more than half that of April to June.

Other  
measures

At the same time, other measures were taken. The approaches to the German coast, the Straits of Dover, and the North Sea from Norway to the Orkneys, were sown with mines, making the activities of the submarines a dangerous and

<sup>1</sup> Admiral Sims, of the U.S.A., was thunderstruck on learning, in April, of the position from Admiral Jellicoe. He expressed his consternation to the British admiral. 'Yes,' said the latter quietly, as though they were discussing the weather, and not the future of the British Empire, 'it is impossible for us to go on with the war, if losses like this continue.'

'What are you going to do about it?' asked Sims.

'Everything that we can. . . . But the situation is very serious.'

'It looks as though the Germans were winning the War,' remarked the American. . . . 'Is there no solution to the problem?'

'Absolutely none that we can see now,' Jellicoe announced.

(From Sims and Hendrick, *Victory at Sea*, abridged.)

<sup>2</sup> 'The Admiralty just saved its face by professing a tardy conversion . . . but the credit for this life-bringing change belongs almost entirely to the Premier.' (Cruttwell, *History of the Great War*.)

terrible task.<sup>1</sup> 'Q' boats—armed vessels disguised to look like innocent merchant ships—were used to decoy and sink the enemy. Finally, the whole population of Britain was put on a strict food ration. National food rationing.

The intensified submarine campaign brought America into the War, as even the Germans expected. In March five American ships were sunk with loss of life. Next month America declared war on Germany. President Wilson's noble words on that occasion are worth remembering: 'To such a task' (he said) 'we can dedicate our lives and our fortunes, everything that we are, and everything that we have, with the pride of those who know that the day has come when America is privileged to spend her blood and her might for the principles that gave her birth and happiness and the peace which she has treasured. God helping her, she can do no other.'

America declares war (April)

The German submarine campaign was a gambler's throw; and it had lost. Britain was not beaten, and now American help for the Allies would soon be forthcoming. American men-of-war arrived at once, and helped in the mine-sowing, and in the convoy system. They also helped to turn the tables on Germany by tightening the blockade on the German coast—which resulted in the slow starvation of the German people.

As America entered the War, Russia went out. By the end of 1916 there were signs that a revolution could not long be delayed. There followed a bad winter, with starving people waiting in queues for food in the streets of Petrograd and Moscow. The Tsar was blissfully unconscious that the most appalling revolution in a thousand years was about to break over his country; he was not, in fact, capable of grasping the seriousness of the situation. The revolution broke out in the streets of Petrograd early in March, 1917; on the 15th the Tsar was forced to abdicate. A provisional government was set up which by stages moved to the left, till Kerensky became its head. He tried hard to carry on the War, but it proved to be impossible. While the provisional government was tottering to its fall, the Germans were active. They allowed revolutionary leaders to enter Russia in order to undermine the discipline of the Russian armies—a fairly easy matter at this stage.

1917  
First  
Russian  
Revolution  
(March)

<sup>1</sup> Many members of submarine crews went mad under the strain.

Among others, Lenin crossed the frontier. When the ruthless founder of Communist Russia entered Petrograd, he went swiftly to work; in November he was ready to strike. It was then that the Communists, under Lenin's direction, seized the railway stations and chief buildings in Petrograd; Kerensky fled. The Communist revolution, directed by the master-mind of Lenin, had succeeded. Although Russia was still nominally at war with Germany, it was Lenin's intention to make peace at the earliest possible moment; negotiations were shortly opened with the Germans. Meanwhile Ludendorff had moved to Riga.

The  
Communist  
Revolution  
(Nov.)

The Western Powers gained another ally this year. In the previous December, an Anglo-French force had landed in Athens, where shells had been fired on the royal palace, and since then the British Navy had kept guard on the Greek coast. In June 1917 King Constantine was forcibly deposed and his second son placed on the throne. The pro-English statesman, Venizelos, then assumed charge of affairs, and Greece entered the War on the side of the Allies.<sup>1</sup>

The  
coercion of  
Greece

The Germans made no great effort on the Western Front in 1917. The Allies, on the other hand, embarked on two major and terribly costly offensives, both failures, besides several minor and more successful attacks. The French supreme command was taken from Joffre, and given to General Nivelle who planned an offensive on the Aisne, between Soissons and Rheims. The general's plans were widely circulated; so widely in fact, that several battle-orders fell into the hands of the enemy. When the attack began (16 April), the Germans were fully prepared for it. The French gained part of the height above the Aisne, known as the Chemin des Dames (see map, p. 996), but at a terrible cost of life. The offensive was broken off in a fortnight, and was followed by a serious mutiny in the French Army. Nivelle was dismissed, and Petain restored command.

The  
Western  
Front

Nivelle's  
attack  
(April)

Arras  
(April) and  
Messines  
(June)

While Nivelle's attack was proceeding, the British fought a successful battle, under General Allenby, in front of Arras, and took the famous Vimy Ridge. They followed this up in June by another push at Messines, south of Ypres, under General

<sup>1</sup> The Allied treatment of Greece has often been compared, in Germany, with the invasion of Belgium.

Plumer. The battle of Messines was preceded by the explosion of nineteen mines under the German front; in addition 2,374 guns, on a front of 17,000 yards, used 92,000 tons of ammunition.

These successes, though gained at enormous expense of material, were not so wasteful of life as the Somme. That unhappy precedent, however, was about to be followed. The third battle of Ypres, or Passchendaele, began in July and lasted till November. It was fought under the most dreadful conditions; most observers are agreed that Passchendaele was the crowning horror of the war on the Western Front. The painful advance, from one heavily shelled trench-line to another, across the odious mud, made worse by torrents of rain, was pushed forward, by slow degrees, under the pitiless fire of the German guns. Month after month it went on, as the Germans were pushed slowly back from Ypres. The commanders on the spot begged Haig to desist, but the Commander-in-Chief, who himself never visited the battle-field, insisted on continuing. When at last, in November, the long agony ended, the British had gained a few thousand yards of useless ground at the cost of 300,000 casualties.

The campaign ended, however, on a brighter note. The battle of Cambrai (Nov.-Dec.) was remarkable for the first use of tanks—a British invention—on a large scale. Tanks had been used on the Somme in the previous year, and had since been manufactured in large numbers. Their employment at Cambrai came as a complete surprise to the Germans. There was no preliminary bombardment of the German trenches; 340 tanks suddenly crossed No-man's Land one morning, and the guns opened fire at the same moment. The tanks crushed down the German barbed-wire, and protected our infantry while the latter stormed the German trenches. A considerable advance was made; then the enemy counter-attacked, and prevented the original surprise turning into a defeat. Cambrai was a lesson for 1918.

But the Germans had still a surprise to spring on the Allies this year. At the end of 1915 they had conquered Serbia, at the end of 1916, Rumania; suddenly, in October 1917, they planned to crush yet another of the Allies—Italy. They broke

Caporetto (Oct.) through the Italian front at Caporetto, and routed the Italian 2nd Army. Most of the province of Venetia was lost, and the enemy were within a few miles of Venice itself. A defence was at last made along the Piave, where British and French divisions were hurried to the relief of their stricken ally.

Capture of Baghdad (March) and Jerusalem (Dec.) To balance this disaster, there was good news from the East. General Maude had been put in command in Mesopotamia, and at the beginning of 1917 he re-took Kut. In March his troops entered the historic city of Baghdad, and then pursued the retreating enemy northwards. In Palestine General Allenby assumed command, with Lawrence and his Arabs in the desert harassing the Turkish communications. Allenby began capturing Beersheba (October); then he drove the Turks from Gaza, and made a general advance. Just before Christmas he entered Jerusalem, which city had not been taken by a Christian army since the thirteenth century.

#### 5. *Attack and Counter-Attack, 1918*

The Central Powers began the year 1918 by settling with Russia and Rumania. Trotsky, the chief Russian delegate, had been instructed by Lenin to make peace at any cost; and the German terms were exceedingly severe. Russia was stripped of all the land she had acquired in Europe since the seventeenth century. The Germans intended to occupy the ceded territory till the conclusion of a general peace; actually, the five states of Finland, Esthonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Poland were afterwards granted their independence by the victorious Allies. The Germans also occupied the Ukraine; their troops continued to hold a frontier stretching from the Gulf of Finland to the Black Sea, and to keep order in the occupied provinces. Forty German divisions were thus retained in the East. A peace was also imposed on Rumania, by which the Black Sea ports and the Rumanian oil-fields were given over to German control.

The German Western offensive (March) Freed from anxiety in the East, the German Higher Command determined on a knock-out blow in the West, to be delivered before the Americans could arrive in large numbers. Three great blows were planned, and carried out in the months of March, April, and May. The first was delivered against the British line from Arras to the Oise (map, p. 996); the right of



Germans abandoned their Marne salient, as well as the smaller one at St. Mihiel. On 8 August the British attacked on the Amiens front, and drove the enemy once more across the Somme battle-field. August 8, Ludendorff said, was 'the black day of the German army', for after it the whole long line began



THE WESTERN FRONT (1914-18)

to retreat. The Belgians and British advanced from the Ypres Salient, and at last drove the enemy from the Belgian coast. Throughout September and October the general advance continued. The superiority of the Allies in guns, tanks, and man-power was now overwhelming; there could only be an end.

The End  
(11 Nov.) When at last the Germans sued for an armistice, a third of Belgium and nearly the whole of France had been cleared of the enemy. The battle line passed through or near Mons, Sedan, and Verdun; memories of 1870, 1914, and 1916 were revived by these historic names.



In the last few weeks of the War, Germany was deserted by all her allies. The first to crumple up was Bulgaria. The Bulgars were routed on the Vardar (September) and sued for peace. It was granted; Bulgaria was occupied, and the German communications with Turkey cut. In September, too, General Allenby began his last offensive against the Turks—a brilliant success. His troops broke through the Turkish line, and cavalry was used to cut off the retreat of the enemy; aeroplanes were also used with great effect on the Turks as they retired. Damascus fell on 2 October, after which the advance was pushed forward 200 miles to Aleppo. The Turks then sued for an armistice; the Dardanelles were opened, and Constantinople entered by Allied troops. Bulgaria  
defeated  
(Sept.)

In October, the Italians and British attacked on the Piave front. The Austrians gave way and were driven back into their own territory. Soon the revolution which broke out in Vienna (November) put all in confusion. The Italians entered Trieste and Trent, and the passage of the Allies through the Tyrol into Bavaria was ensured. This helped to forward the revolution which was now proceeding in Germany. Austria  
defeated  
(Nov.)

## DATE SUMMARY: THE GREAT WAR (1914-18)

WESTERN FRONTS	EASTERN FRONTS	NAVAL AND COLONIAL
	<i>1914</i>	
Aug. Germans invade Belgium and France <del>the</del> Frontiers <del>Mons</del>	Aug. <del>T</del> Tannenberg	
Sept. <del>the</del> Marne		Conquest of German S.W. Africa and German New Guinea
Oct. Fall of Antwerp	Oct. Turkey joins Germany	Nov. Capture of Kiao-Chow
Nov.-Dec. 1st <del>Y</del> Ypres		Dec. <del>F</del> Falkland Isles
	<i>1915</i>	
Feb. <del>N</del> Neuve Chapelle	Apr. Gallipoli landing	
May. Italy joins Allies	May-Sept. Russian Retreat	May. <i>Lusitania</i> sunk
Sept. <del>L</del> Loos	Aug. Suvla Bay landing	
	Oct. Bulgaria joins Germany	
	Nov. Germans conquer Serbia	
	Dec. Evacuation of Gallipoli	
	Salonika Front	
	<i>1916</i>	
Feb.-July <del>V</del> Verdun	Apr. Surrender of Kut	Feb. Kameruns conquered
	Lawrence in Arabia	
July-Nov. <del>the</del> Somme	June Last Russian offensive	May <del>J</del> Jutland
	Nov.-Dec. Germans conquer Rumania	
	<i>1917</i>	
Apr. Submarine peril	Mar. Baghdad captured	Feb. Unrestricted submarine warfare
America joins Allies	First Russian Revolution	
Nivelle's attack		
<del>A</del> Arras		
June <del>M</del> Messines	June Greece joins Allies	
July-Nov. <del>P</del> Passchendaele	Oct. <del>C</del> Caporetto	
Nov.-Dec. <del>C</del> Cambrai	Nov. Bolshevik Revolution	
	Dec. Jerusalem captured	Dec. Conquest of German E. Africa
	<i>1918</i>	
Mar. German Offensive	Mar. Treaty of Brest-Litovsk	
Apr. <del>the</del> Lys		
Zeebrugge raid		
Foch Generalissimo		
July Foch's Offensive	Sept. Bulgaria defeated	
Aug.-Nov. Allied advance	Oct. Turkey	
Nov. Armistice with Germany	Nov. Austria	
	"	
	"	

## XLIV

### MODERN PROBLEMS<sup>1</sup>

#### I. *Post-War Europe*

ONE of the most remarkable features of post-War Europe has been the rise, in one country after another, and in one form or another, of dictatorships. These dictatorships have arisen partly owing to war conditions or to the condition of strain following the War. Where popular government has broken down, and where civil war seemed certain to supervene, dictatorships have been set up to restore order.

In Russia, as we have seen, the Bolshevik Revolution (1917 onwards) was a consequence, first of the break-down of the imperial autocracy, and then of the failure of Kerensky's popular government to carry on the war and rule a distracted country. Lenin, installed in power, soon dismissed the Constituent Assembly, which had been elected by universal suffrage to provide a constitution for revolutionary Russia, and he imposed his own ruthless will on the millions of his countrymen. The Communists, following the teaching of Karl Marx,<sup>2</sup> aimed at the eventual control of all land and natural wealth and all the means of production by, and in the interests of, the workers; but even Lenin found it impossible to achieve this millennium in a few weeks or months. In practice Russia was ruled by the Communist Party, a small minority. Under the dictatorship, first of Lenin (died 1924) and then of Stalin, Russia has certainly suffered great hardships, but in many respects she has made great strides in national development. Lenin proved one of the greatest rulers Russia has ever known, and he literally worked himself to death. His successor, Stalin, in his Five-Year Plans (from 1928), aimed at revolutionizing the whole life of this vast country. New schools and universities were built, and large state-owned factories and farms have

<sup>1</sup> The events mentioned in this chapter are related in the merest outline. No serious attempt can yet be made to estimate their relative importance.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 931.

been equipped with the most modern machinery. The Communist state has now been firmly set up and is a far better organized government than that of the Tsar. The methods of the Russian Communists were, by our standards, cruel and ruthless, but so were those of the tsarist régime.

Turkey  
under  
Mustapha  
Kemal  
After the Russian Revolution, the Turkish. Here again, one man of exceptional ability seized the opportunity created by defeat in war to organize a revolution. Mustapha Kemal, after chasing the Greeks into the sea (1922) and compelling the Allies to revise the terms of peace, proceeded to overthrow the old Turkish régime and then to lay the foundations of modern Turkey. The Sultan was deposed; the office of Caliph (official head of Islam), with a history of 1,300 years behind it, was ended. Strangely enough, this startling event evoked hardly a murmur throughout the Mohammedan world, from Constantinople to Calcutta. Mustapha Kemal also introduced Western customs, and Western dress, especially for women, who were commanded to appear unveiled in public. Even the capital was changed—from Constantinople (renamed Istanbul) to Angora.

Italy under  
Mussolini  
In Italy the Fascist dictatorship arose out of the breakdown of parliamentary government, which had proved unable to cope with the disorders which followed the end of the War. What threatened to become a civil war between the Communists and their opponents was ended by the march of the black-shirted Fascisti on Rome (October 1922). The Fascist leader (Duce), Benito Mussolini, seized power and proceeded to destroy parliamentary government, trade unions, and all democratic institutions. He preferred efficiency to liberty, as Englishmen understand that term. His efficiency showed itself in large-scale undertakings, financed by the State, like the making of Alpine roads, and the rebuilding of parts of Rome. Under the Fascist régime Italy has become a military-minded nation, as was shown during the war (1935-6) which resulted in the conquest of Abyssinia.

Germany  
1918-33  
The dire consequences of war were nowhere so manifest as in Germany. The lot of the Socialist and Democratic parties, who attempted to govern Germany after the War, was a hard one. Pressed to make impossible payments to the Allies, the

German Governments strove against terrific odds to prevent the finances of the country from breaking down. But the French still pressed for full payment of Reparations (war damages); when this was not forthcoming they sent an army into the Ruhr valley (1923) which remained there for a year. There was a financial collapse; money lost its value and millions of German marks could be bought for a penny. Later, more moderate demands were put forward for the payment of Reparations, and by the Treaty of Locarno (1925) Germany was for the first time approached in a friendly spirit and invited to enter the League of Nations. The British Government, seeing that the continued coercion of Germany could lead only to further disasters everywhere, at last withdrew the British army of occupation from the Rhine, and persuaded the French to do so too (1929-30).

These concessions, however, came too late to inaugurate a new era of European peace. Germany was still disarmed, though surrounded by a ring of armed states; and all attempts to persuade the other nations to begin a general disarmament in accordance with their treaty undertakings broke down through mutual fears and jealousies. The Germans would wait no longer. Their national indignation found expression—during a severe economic crisis—in the organization of the Nazi party by Adolf Hitler, who became Chancellor in 1933, and at once proceeded to remodel the country on Fascist lines. As in Italy and Russia, personal liberty was violently restricted. The leading Communists and Social-Democrats were put in prison. The Nazis began a persecution of the Jews, as persons hostile to the control of Germany by the Germans. An extraordinary change came over the whole country, which for fifteen years had been living on the verge of despair. Hitler became a national idol, and his power and influence over the German people surpassed even that of Bismarck. When Hindenburg died in 1934, Hitler became President of the German Reich. All Germany was behind him when he declared that Reparation payments must cease, that Germany demanded equality with the other Great Powers, and that she did not intend to remain disarmed in a continent of armed Powers. So Europe looked on uneasily while Germany rearmed and

The Nazi  
Revolution  
1933

Hitler

entered the Rhineland (1936). In 1935 Britain had so far recognized the changed circumstances as to negotiate a naval agreement, thus recognizing Germany's right to a larger navy than was permitted under the Versailles Treaty.

**Trade Cycles** All these political upheavals had their roots in economic problems which were common to all mankind; the key to the tangle of post-War world politics is to be found in the trade cycle of world-boom and world-slump. After the Great War came a period of political and economic confusion (1920-4), which caused a slump in world trade. Politically, matters were at their worst in 1923, the year of the French invasion of the Ruhr. On the economic side, the world's monetary system was already upset by the War itself, and the situation was worsened by the demand for the settlement of war-debts and Reparations. Even the victorious states suffered from the plight of the defeated countries; and the lesson was very slowly learnt that you cannot trade with your neighbour if your neighbour is ruined.

**Slump of 1920-4** Next followed a boom in world trade (1924-9), coinciding with the improved international relations which led to the Treaty of Locarno (1925). But in this 'boom' Britain had little share. The reason for this was that she returned (1925) to the Gold Standard at too high a parity,<sup>1</sup> which caused British export trades to suffer, especially the coal trade. This partly accounts for the Coal Strike—followed by the General Strike—of 1926.<sup>2</sup>

**Boom of 1924-9** But the 'boom' was not solidly based; international co-operation was sadly lacking, and high tariffs in nearly all countries still restricted the freedom of trade. Soon the whole world was in the grip of another slump (1929-34). It was a time of great distress in the midst of plenty; and at one time it was calculated that there were thirty million unemployed in the world. Britain was forced off the Gold Standard (1931), and half the world soon followed Britain's example. A World Economic Conference was held in London (1933), but it broke

<sup>1</sup> Britain returned to the Gold Standard at the pre-War parity, i.e. she guaranteed that a pound sterling should be of the same value in gold as before the War.

<sup>2</sup> See below, p. 1005.

down; and this was followed by the break-down of the Disarmament Conference at Geneva. The 'Locarno spirit' no longer existed.

This cycle of boom and slump in world trade illustrates the interplay of economic and political factors. Mussolini rose to power during the first slump; Hitler during the second—though of course the Fascist and Nazi Revolutions had political as well as economic causes. The second and more severe slump smote Germany with a severity which for various reasons exceeded anything experienced in any other major European country.

International co-operation, economic as well as political, is necessary to ensure peace in this modern world of the interdependence of nations. It was to end international anarchy that the League of Nations was brought into existence at the end of the Great War. But without American support, with several of the other Great Powers hostile or indifferent, the League could not but be in constant difficulties. And it is difficult to see how a League can ever be effective while nations continue to think of themselves as sovereign states and refuse to abandon their sovereign freedom. The most hopeful sign is that, among a large portion of mankind, for the first time in history, the need for international co-operation is realized. If this hope be not achieved, Europe must head for another Great War, which, under modern conditions, may mean the suicide of Western civilization.

Order or  
Anarchy?

## 2. *British Problems*

British problems since 1918 have been serious enough, but not comparable with the violent upheavals through which most European countries have passed. The stability of Britain, and the comparative ease with which she withstood the rude shock of the War, earned the admiration and envy of foreign observers. True, Britain had not suffered so much as either France or Germany; she had been neither invaded nor defeated.

The outstanding political event in post-War England was the rise of the Labour Party and the submergence of the once-

Rise of the  
Labour  
Party

triumphant Liberal Party. Widespread discontent at modern industrial conditions—slum housing, chronic unemployment and poverty in the midst of plenty—led to a growing demand for drastic remedies. The Labour Party suggested Socialism. By taking control of the railways, the banks, the chief industries, and the land, it was claimed that the profits at present going to private enterprise would come to the State, which would then be in a position to enforce a more equitable distribution of wealth. Socialism was to come, not by a violent revolution, as in Russia, but gradually and by parliamentary means. This programme was opposed by the Conservative Party which claimed that Capitalism was not a decaying system, the Socialists declared, but was still capable of being improved and reformed to meet the changing conditions.

Decline of the Liberal Party Between these two opposing views, the Liberal Party had nothing definite to offer, and it gradually declined. It was first of all weakened by the split between the Asquithians and the Lloyd Georgians, dating from 1916,<sup>1</sup> but even after this breach had been temporarily healed, the Liberals steadily lost ground after the General Election of 1935 the party was reduced to twenty members in the House of Commons. The practical disappearance of this once famous party—with its great memories of Fox, Gladstone, Asquith—was regretted even by some of its opponents. But English Liberalism had made its contribution to history; it had impregnated the British nation with its ideals. Compared with most continental peoples, all English men are Liberals.

First Baldwin Ministry 1923-4 The Conservative Government which came into office after the fall of the Lloyd George Coalition (1922) was presided over first by Bonar Law—already a dying man—and then (1923) by Mr. Stanley Baldwin. Mr. Baldwin raised the issue of Tariff Reform, which had been dormant since Joseph Chamberlain's time; he held that a tariff would enable the Government to regulate trade so as to benefit the British manufacturer and artisan. He appealed to the electors on this issue; but the electors remained true to Free Trade. In the new House of Commons there were three parties—Conservative, Labour, and Liberal—none of which was strong enough to rule alone.

The Tariff issue

<sup>1</sup> See above, p. 969.



Mr. Asquith, once again Liberal leader,<sup>1</sup> agreed to support Labour in office. But the first Labour Government (Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, 1924) could do little under the conditions of minority rule. It fell in less than a year, when Liberal support was withdrawn. Mr. Baldwin then took office a second time.

First  
Labour  
Govern-  
ment  
1924

The second Baldwin Ministry (1924-9) also failed to cope effectively with the burning questions of unemployment and housing, and there was much discontent in the country. In 1926 there was a serious Coal Strike, and then the chief trade unions declared a General Strike in support of the miners. Britain passed through this crisis without a revolution, partly owing to the moderation of the trade union leaders, who called off the strike when they saw it was hopeless. The original miners' strike, however, continued, and the miners maintained the struggle for six months. The Trade Union movement as a whole received a severe blow from an Act of 1927 which, among other things, declared general strikes illegal.

Baldwin  
and  
MacDonald  
Ministries

But a second Labour Government (1929-31)—still dependent on Liberal support—was no more successful in solving the economic problems. Then, in 1931, came a financial crisis, when the British banking system showed less than its usual stability; the Ministry was faced with an unbalanced Budget, and, worse still, threatened with a financial panic such as had already shaken France and Germany. A majority of the Labour Ministry refused to economize at the expense of the unemployed, and the Cabinet broke up. Mr. MacDonald, his Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Snowden, and two other Labour ministers accepted the king's suggestion of joining hands with their Conservative and Liberal opponents to form a National Government (1931). A general election later in the year showed that the late Labour Ministry was discredited, and provided an overwhelming majority for Mr. MacDonald at the head of his new Cabinet. This Government adopted Mr. Baldwin's remedy of a British tariff, which came into operation in 1932, thus ending a century of Free Trade. It also brought the pound sterling off the Gold Standard, which gave a great impetus to the export trade. By this means and with the help

National  
govern-  
ment, 1931

Protection  
—Import  
Duties Act  
1932

<sup>1</sup> The Protection issue had temporarily united the followers of Asquith and Lloyd George.

of a general world recovery, the National Government succeeded in putting Britain's financial house in order, though Mr. MacDonald lost his popularity with the working class. He resigned in 1935, and Mr. Baldwin became Prime Minister for the third time.

Jubilee  
(1935) and  
death of  
George V  
(1936)

In 1935 King George V celebrated his Jubilee—the twentieth anniversary of his accession—which was the occasion of a widespread demonstration of affection from the people towards their sovereign. The king died in the following January, having reigned over the British people during one of the most trying and difficult periods of their long history.

Edward  
VIII (1936)

He was succeeded by his eldest son, Edward VIII, who, however, abdicated after a ten months' reign in favour of his brother, King George VI (Dec. 1936).

### 3. *The British Empire*

The British Empire is the largest political community in the world. Within its borders there is peace, as in the Roman Empire of old. But, unlike the Roman, the British Empire is not made up of territories which conveniently form one geographical unit; though the increasing facilities of land, sea, and air transport are doing much to lessen this disadvantage. The Empire, which is scattered over five continents, was formed in the days of the sailing ship and the steam packet; it is more closely knit together in the days of the Air Mail.

Extent of  
the Empire

The Empire comprises, in Europe—Britain, Ireland, and the islands of Malta and Cyprus, and the rock of Gibraltar; in Africa—the Union of South Africa, large territories in East Africa, the Sudan, and the West African colonies; in Asia—the Indian Empire, Ceylon, Burma, Malaya, Aden, and Hong Kong; in Australasia—the Commonwealth of Australia, the Dominion of New Zealand, British New Guinea, and various Pacific islands; in America—the Dominion of Canada, Newfoundland, the British West Indies, British Guiana and Honduras (situated on the old Spanish Main), and the Falkland Islands.

Nearly every one of these numerous parts of the Empire stands on a slightly different footing from any other part; the Empire in fact, has been well described<sup>1</sup> as a 'procession of different

<sup>1</sup> Zimmern, *The Third British Empire*.

countries at different stages in their advance towards complete self-government'. The British ideal of self-governing colonies has been deliberately pursued for the past hundred years—since Lord Durham's time.<sup>1</sup> But, since the Empire contains so many different peoples,<sup>2</sup> some highly civilized, some not, it is not possible for all to enjoy the same measure of political freedom. Especially since the War, however, it has been realized that 'free and equal partnership' is the ideal to be aimed at. Hence the name 'British Commonwealth of Nations' better describes something entirely new in the world's history, something which the older name 'Empire' does not quite express.

The  
British  
Common-  
wealth of  
Nations

The various portions of the British Commonwealth may be divided for convenience into four categories, according to the degree of self-government each type enjoys. First come the fully self-governing countries.<sup>3</sup> These are Great Britain, Northern Ireland,<sup>4</sup> and the five Dominions (Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, and the Irish Free State) together with Southern Rhodesia (granted self-government, 1923). The position of the Dominions was defined at the Imperial Conference of 1926, when it was declared that Great Britain and the Dominions are 'equal in status'. This definition was later embodied in the Statute of Westminster (1931).

(i) Domin-  
ion Status

In the second category we may place the vast Indian Empire with its 300 million inhabitants, which is a special case and will be considered later.

(ii) India

Thirdly, in addition to the British Commonwealth of Nations proper, there is the Colonial Empire (Crown Colonies and Protectorates), which provides important raw materials such as

(iii) Crown  
colonies  
and  
Protector-  
ates

<sup>1</sup> See p. 848.

<sup>2</sup> The Judicial Committee of the Privy Council serves as a Court of Appeal for the Empire. It includes distinguished judges from India and from the Dominions beyond the seas. For example, in June 1936, it had a list of thirty-two appeals—sixteen from India, five from Canada, two each from New Zealand and Ceylon, two from the West African Court of Appeal, and one each from New South Wales, Nigeria, and Palestine. It decides cases according to the law of the people affected—whether it be the Dutch law of South Africa, the French law of Quebec, the Hindu or the Mohammedan law of India, or the Maori customs of New Zealand.

<sup>3</sup> Newfoundland formerly possessed Dominion status, but this has recently been withdrawn.

<sup>4</sup> See p. 973.

oil, seeds, tin, and rubber. Sixty million native people, living in some forty-five territories widely scattered over the globe, look to Great Britain as their trustee for justice, peace, and good government. All these colonies enjoy a varying measure of local self-government, but the final authority is the British Parliament. The Crown Colonies and Protectorates may be divided into three groups:

- (a) Colonies where both the Council (executive) and the Assembly (legislative) contain some members elected by the people in the colony. In this group are included Cyprus,<sup>1</sup> Jamaica, Kenya, Nigeria, and Malaya.
- (b) Colonies where the Assembly, but not the Council, contains elected members, e.g. Northern Rhodesia, Hong Kong, and the Falkland Islands.
- (c) Colonies having neither Parliament nor Council but ruled directly by the Governor, e.g. Gibraltar, St. Helena, and various African colonies like Ashanti and Somaliland.

(iv) Man-  
dated  
territories Fourthly, and lastly, comes a group which has been added since the War, and consists of ex-German or ex-Turkish colonies, administered under a Mandate from the League of Nations. These again may be sub-divided, on the same principle as the colonies, into groups according to their stage of political development; the most developed is Palestine.<sup>2</sup>

The British Empire is not static; and the Crown Colonies may be regarded as developing towards a higher status. In some instances this process has caused friction, where there has been controversy as to the exact degree of self-government which ought to be conceded.

In two recent cases, countries have moved out of the British Commonwealth; these are Egypt and Iraq. Egypt, formerly a province of the Turkish Empire, occupied by Great Britain in 1882, became a protectorate of the British Empire for the period of the War. Immediately after the War, a national

<sup>1</sup> The Council at Cyprus contains 12 Greeks, 3 Moslems, 9 British nominated members, and the Governor.

<sup>2</sup> A national home in Palestine was made for Jewish immigrants, with the promise that due regard would be paid to the rights of the native Arabs. Nevertheless, there has been much friction between the two races.

agitation for independence was set on foot, and this demand was conceded in 1922 with certain restrictions to safeguard British communications in Egypt and in the Suez Canal. By the Anglo-Egyptian Treaty of 1936, the British Government undertook to terminate its military occupation of the country, and to assist in abolishing the Capitulations (special Courts for Europeans in Egypt).

The problem of Iraq was somewhat different. When the provinces of Syria and Iraq (or Mesopotamia) were taken from Turkey at the end of the War, many Englishmen, including Colonel Lawrence, wished to see a great independent Arab state formed, stretching from the Mediterranean to the Persian Gulf. But the French had received a Mandate for Syria, and they drove out the Arab Government which Lawrence had helped to set up in Damascus. To Lawrence's bitter disappointment the dream of an Arab Empire had to be abandoned. There remained Iraq, which was a British Mandated Territory under the League. In 1921 it was decided to compensate Lawrence's late ally, the Emir Feisul, who had been deprived of a throne at Damascus, by giving him another kingdom. He was made King of Iraq (1921) on the understanding that at some future time the kingdom should be made independent. After various Turkish attempts to retake Mosul—with its oil-wells—had been frustrated, it was judged advisable to carry out this undertaking: Iraq accordingly received its independence and was admitted to the League of Nations (1932).

Independence of  
Iraq  
1932

One of the most complex problems which statesmanship has ever had to solve has been the relations between Britain and India in the twentieth century. For some time there had been a growing demand in India for some enlarged form of self-government; there was also a section of opinion which demanded, as in Ireland, the complete severance of the British connexion. Prominent among the latter section, especially after the War, was the Mahatma Gandhi, a saintly ascetic reformer who disapproved of Western civilization and disliked its influence in his native country. Succeeding British Governments were deeply concerned with this question, but it was not till 1917 that an important pronouncement was made. In that year, it was declared by the Secretary of State for

India

The India (Mr. Montagu) in the Lloyd George Ministry that 'the policy of His Majesty's Government is that of the increasing association of Indians in every branch of the administration, and the general development of self-governing institutions, with a view to the progressive realization of responsible government in India as an integral part of the British Empire'.

The  
Montagu  
Pronounce-  
ment

After this it was impossible to stand still, and Mr. Montagu went out to India to consult with the Viceroy, Lord Chelmsford. The Montagu-Chelmsford Report (1918), which they produced, recommended a system known as dyarchy, by which responsibility should be shared between the British Government of India and various elected Indian councils and assemblies. The principle was the same as that by which a measure of self-government had already been granted to various British colonies. There was to be a Legislative Assembly for the whole of India, as well as assemblies for the various provinces.

The  
Montagu-  
Chelmsford  
Report  
1918

These recommendations were put into force by the India Act of 1919. But the new constitution, which lasted for sixteen years, was opposed by the Indian National Party and did not work smoothly. In 1927 Sir John Simon presided over a Commission appointed to report to the Cabinet; the Simon Report (1930) was followed by Round Table Conferences, the second of which was attended by Gandhi. Then, in 1935, a further India Act was passed, by which a much larger measure of responsibility was given to Indians. The Provinces of India (as distinct from the territories of the Princes) were granted their own Parliaments and executive Councils, from which the British element was to be excluded altogether, as it was from the All-India Parliament. Certain safeguards, however, chiefly military, were placed in the hands of the British Viceroy and his Council. These safeguards were to be retained at least while the new constitution got into working order, and until such time as India may be considered ready for full equality with the Dominions.

Indian  
Acts, 1919  
and 1935

The British Commonwealth of Nations has had its share of difficulties during the unsettled period and economic crises following the Great War. Some of its members, particularly India and Ireland, have been discontented. But it would be

surprising, in an Empire which includes about a quarter of the land-surface of the globe and a quarter of the world's inhabitants, if there were no difficulties.

Britain and the Dominions, the United States (the other great English-speaking community), together with France and the Scandinavian countries, are the chief places where democracy has proved reasonably successful. Democracy to-day can scarcely face the world with the old confidence of the nineteenth century when it ruled political theory almost as securely as Britannia ruled the waves. In all the revolutions from 1789 to 1914, nations had aimed at setting up a parliamentary government in imitation of Britain, the Mother of Parliaments; nearly all the revolutions since 1917 have resulted in the setting up of dictatorships. Many criticisms can be justly levelled against democracy. But as long as the English-speaking nations of the world are determined to make democratic government work, the system is likely to continue. Government by persuasion may yet prevail over government by dictation, and democracy may still have a great contribution to make to the progress of mankind.

The  
future of  
democratic  
government

## XLV

### VICTORIAN TO GEORGIAN

(1887-1936)

#### I. *The Conquests of Science*

1887-1936 IN a former chapter (Chapter XLI) we looked backwards over fifty years of British history, taking our stand at the year 1887, the year of Queen Victoria's first Jubilee. In this chapter we shall briefly survey the following fifty years (1887-1936) up to the death of George V. Although manners and men have changed greatly, one thing is characteristic of both periods: the applications of science to inventions and industry continue to change our daily lives—an Industrial Revolution is still in progress. It must not be too readily assumed that all the uses man makes of science mean 'progress'; a wealth of material things does not necessarily make for happiness; nor has our progressive world yet solved the problems of unemployment and distress. At its present stage, mechanical progress has raised as many problems as it has solved; the death-roll on the roads and the increased means of destruction in modern war may be taken as examples.

Mass production and cheap goods IN the days before the Industrial Revolution, a man usually either worked in the fields or was a craftsman of some sort. If he worked in the fields, his work was varied by Nature—he was in touch with the seasons and the weather. If he was a craftsman, he made some article from the raw material to the finished product; his work was interesting and he knew his customers personally. But the modern factory worker has no such interest; his own work is but a tiny part in a vast and complicated process. This process is mass-production, which has made great strides since 1918. Mass-production turns out everything, from pins to motor-cars. The ingenious device by which the parts of a motor-car are fitted together—the body of the car being placed on a conveyer (moving rod), each workman standing ready to add his particular contribution as it passes him—is but one of many. The most complicated instruments, for example the automatic telephone, are turned out



by mass-production. But the brain behind the machine is that of the inventor; in the actual *making* the human element is subordinate to another machine which another inventor has devised. Any one who has watched some article of daily use being turned out in a mass-production factory must have been struck by the marvels of scientific invention. He must also have noticed the fact that the workmen are but human cogs in the machinery. One serious result of modern factory conditions is that the workers tend more and more to look for their interest in life outside work hours. The romance of the cinema and the excitement of a football match prove a greater stimulus than labour which has become merely mechanical.

Cheap clothing and footwear, cheap furniture, cheap cars—readily obtainable nowadays with the spread of the hire-purchase system—and a thousand other articles in daily use unknown to our ancestors, recall the boast of Macaulay that ‘our homes are filled with conveniences which the kings of former times might have envied’. But the scourge of unemployment reminds us that the social structure is ill-organized, and that there is privation in the midst of plenty. Never before has man had such dominion over matter; never before have so many people been out of work. Before the War it was the custom for hundreds of men to march up and down the streets of our large cities, carrying banners announcing the fact that they were unemployed. The banners were a challenge to society—‘What are you going to do with us?’—and society failed to answer the question. But, since the War, the evil has grown greater: the figures of the registered unemployed in Britain rose at one time to over two millions. The worst cases were in those derelict areas like South Wales and the Tyneside where, owing to the decline of particular trades, a whole industry was destroyed, and whole towns and villages were filled with men and youths out of work.

The decline of British trade has been, for us, the most serious economic event of the twentieth century. During the half century now under consideration, Britain lost the leadership of the industrial world. In the earlier stages of the Industrial Revolution, our supremacy was unchallenged; now Britain is but one among several rivals. Lancashire cotton goods used

Unemploy-  
ment

Decline of  
British  
trade

to supply the needs of most of the world ; now they must compete all over the world with the goods of Japan. There have been other contributory causes for the decline of British trade. In the nineteenth century, British enterprise opened up many undeveloped areas all over the world. Britain, for example, supplied a great deal of the capital, some of the labour, and most of the material for the construction of the first railways, harbours, bridges, and factories in Asia, Africa, and South America. Nor has Britain the same monopoly in the newer industries—such as electrical and chemical—which she once had in the steel and engineering trades. Again, the use of oil—early in the twentieth century—instead of coal for sea and land transport has badly hit the great coal-producing areas of Britain. Those that have concentrated on the export trade (like South Wales) have been particularly unfortunate. Where trade has declined, British shipping has naturally declined with it, and the Tyneside is now a derelict area.

Tariffs as  
trade  
barriers Many countries to-day both in Europe and America now restrict foreign trade by means of tariffs. The erection of tariff barriers, while designed to protect home industries in the countries concerned, does not, of course, stimulate international trade. This process—the growth of economic nationalism, by which nations strive to be self-contained—has been particularly unfortunate for the foreign trade of Britain, and for her large mercantile marine, once the carrier of the goods of the world. The serious alteration in our trade balance led at last to Britain herself abandoning her century-old policy of Free Trade and imposing the Tariff Code of 1932.

Thus many factors combined to reduce our trade and cause unemployment, apart from the fact that the Great War dislocated trade everywhere and war-debt complications upset the credit system of the world.

The  
Socialist  
remedy The Labour Party believed that all present remedies (such as tariffs and so-called 'doles' to the unemployed) are mere palliatives, and that until Socialism is seriously tried, our social ills must remain incurable. Socialism, on its economic side, aims at Government control of the use of wealth. The Socialists contend that the evils of to-day are inherent in the present capitalist system of trade and industry: that in a *competitive*



#### TARIFFS AS TRADE BARRIERS

A vivid representation of the 'tariff-walls' which were built up in Europe after the War

world, nation must war against nation and the weakest must go to the wall. The Russian experiment, it is said, points the way. But Russia before its revolution was not a highly organized industrial community, nor dependent on foreign trade. And in any case Britain could scarcely alter her system without the co-operation of other countries.

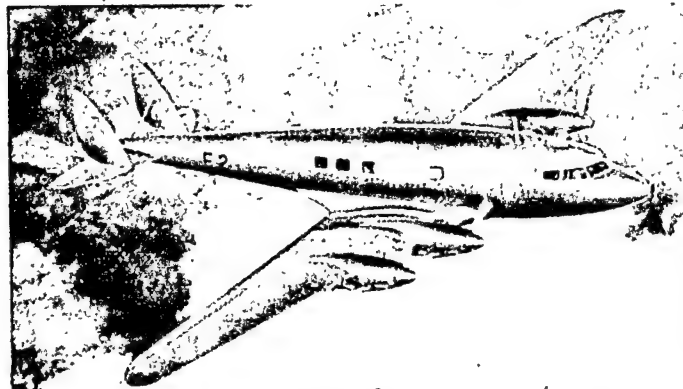
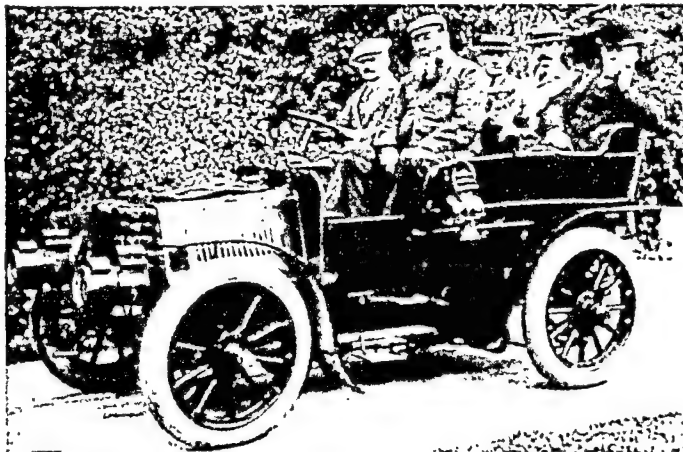
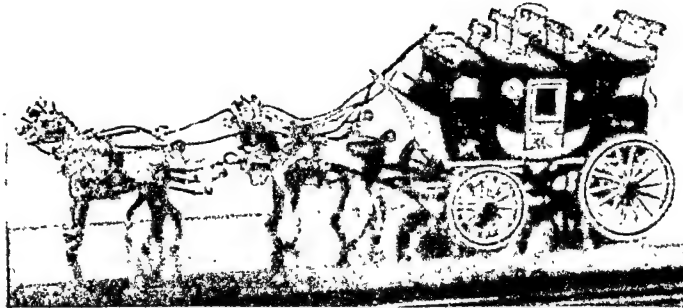
<sup>New industries</sup> The decline of our older industries has been partly balanced by the rise of new ones, connected largely with transport and electrical power, especially in the counties near London. Population now tends to shift from the North to the South away from the old centres of the heavy industries. Among the most important of the newer industries is the making of motor cars, which, with its supplementary trades, provides work for tens of thousands of people. The light high-speed petrol engine, which has transformed the mechanical vehicle, was invented

<sup>Daimler's petrol engine 1885</sup> by the German engineer, Daimler, in 1885. The petrol engine was first used attached to bicycles, but soon motor-cars, going (on the Continent) at about eight miles an hour, took the road. They were curious looking vehicles, usually without any covering except an awning or a striped umbrella. Considerable progress in the mechanism was, however, made on the Continent, especially in France. In England, the first motor-cars, like the first bicycles, were considered ridiculous and dangerous.

<sup>The first motor-cars</sup> A law was passed limiting their speed to four miles per hour, and every motor vehicle had to be preceded by a man carrying a red flag, to warn drivers of horse vehicles of its approach. This law was repealed in 1896, in which year, to mark the end of the restriction, a London to Brighton motor run was organized. The crowd jeered when some of the cars failed to start, but many were impressed when some of the drivers actually completed the journey without mishap.

From that time onwards the motor-car made rapid progress. At the beginning of the new century, it began to invade all the roads of the country-side. There is no need to relate the details of its triumphs here—the improvements in the mechanism and design have made it possible for a racing car to attain a speed of 300 miles per hour. The use of Tarmac<sup>1</sup> has abolished the

<sup>1</sup> 'Tarmac' roads—'Tar-macadamized' roads. For Macadam, see p. 670.



#### THE SPEEDING-UP OF COMMUNICATIONS

*Top*, contemporary model of a Royal Mail Coach of about 1800. *Middle*, one of the earliest motor-cars taking W. G. Grace to Brighton in 1902. *Below*, an air-liner built for the Atlantic air-route, 1937

earlier discomforts, for the first cars covered the country-side with clouds of dust in summer and in winter splashed their headlong course through pools of muddy water.

Social  
effects of  
motoring

The social effects of motoring have been revolutionary. Many parts of Britain formerly remote from railways are now connected with the towns by a regular motor-bus service, and so the old character of village life has been completely altered. The modern Englishman travels far more than his Victorian father or grandfather. Mass production has given us the cheap car; the pioneers in this direction were Mr. Henry Ford in America and Lord Nuffield (Sir William Morris) in England. Tens of thousands of private cars and motor-bicycles and thousands of motor-buses now carry the inhabitants of the huge cities into the remotest districts of the country. But there are evils to balance these advantages. Love of speed often leads to lack of consideration for others: overcrowding on the roads leads to serious danger. The penalty which we pay for our congested roads is the appalling road casualty list—6,000 killed and 200,000 injured a year.<sup>1</sup>

Flying

Flying began with the balloon, which dates from the eighteenth century, and achieved a marked advance by the invention, in 1900, of the large German airships by Count Zeppelin. Experiments with heavier-than-air machines were first made by the American brothers, Orville and Wilbur Wright, who gave demonstrations of aeroplane flying in 1903. In 1909 Blériot made the first cross-Channel flight from France to England. The first flight across the Atlantic was made ten years later, in 1919, following the development of flying during the War—by Sir John Alcock and Sir A. W. Brown. In 1926 Sir Alan Cobham flew to Australia and back, and a few years later Imperial Airways began regular services to India—since extended to all parts of the world.

Blériot  
1909

Alcock and  
Brown  
1919

Wireless

Wireless came at the end of a century which saw more scientific and inventive triumphs than any other. Wireless telegraphy was based on the researches of Clerk-Maxwell (1831-79), working on the concepts of Faraday. These researches were

<sup>1</sup> Compare these figures with the total British casualties in the South African War (1899-1902): 5,700 killed; 22,000 wounded; 16,000 died of disease (see above, p. 929).

followed by those of Signor Marconi, who in 1902 sent the first wireless message from Cornwall to Newfoundland. After the Great War came the supplementary invention of broadcasting, which has altered the outlook of millions of lives. It is interesting to note that, since the invention of the talking picture and the broadcast message or entertainment, the spoken word has played a far greater part in men's lives than was possible in 1918. Broad-casting

It is difficult to estimate the change which science has made in daily life during this half-century. One illustration may indicate its magnitude. At the opening of the twentieth century, the streets of London were illuminated by dim jets of gas; since then, the invention of incandescent mantles, and of the metallic filament lamp (1905), has enabled both gas and electricity to perform marvels of illumination. Instead of the dark or half-lit streets of the Victorian capital, we have the glare and blaze of the West End in the twentieth century. Electric light—with flood-light and search-light—is but one outcome of the discovery of electric power, which can now be used for a hundred purposes. Electric power may yet transform industry and daily life. Lighting

There is another and less pleasing aspect of modern invention—its application to methods of warfare. Each new war in the period under review has revealed fresh possibilities in this direction. The use of poison gas and of bombing from the air first occurred in the Great War; the Italo-Abyssinian War (1935-6) unfortunately showed how poison gas and the air arm could be used together to maim and demoralize a people. It is only too obvious that, if the nations persist in resort to war, this 'progress' in methods of destruction must continue. In the Great War the civil populations were largely spared war's horrors. But air-bombing may bring these horrors home to all; and the scenes of carnage usual at the sack of a medieval city may return. The structure of a large modern city—with its gas, water, and sanitation systems—is extremely complicated; and just as science has evolved this complex life, it has also invented the means of destroying it! But it is, of course, the moral code of the world which is at fault, not science. Men have learnt to use knives for other purposes than Science in war

slaying each other; mankind may yet learn to think of controlling the aeroplane as a useful gift, not as a means of dropping bombs and spreading poison gas.

## 2. *The Changing Scene*

The democratic citizen of the twentieth century has many opportunities denied to his Victorian parents or grandparents. He travels more, sees and hears more of the world outside his own town or village; the motor-car, the cinema, and wireless have all helped in the change. The reaction from the comparative quiet of Victorian England has indeed been great—perhaps too great. The decay of Sunday observance—the most marked differences between Victorian and Georgian England—was symptomatic of a new attitude to life. The disappearance of the gloomy Victorian Sabbath may not be regretted by those who can remember it: but the rush of modern life leaves little room for a day of rest.

Another great difference between the two periods is to be seen in women's dress; the long dresses and flowing tresses of the 'eighties and 'nineties have given place to a more hygienic and less cramping style. This change is but one symbol of the emancipation of women from their former position of dependence in a man-made society. The position of women greatly altered after the events of the War. Women now enter many of the professions on equal terms with men, have equal educational opportunities, and exercise the franchise. It cannot be doubted that their emergence from their comparatively restricted life of former times has meant a great gain in happiness and industry. Scarcely less remarkable is the change in the normal parental attitude to children, who are now allowed freedom, both of movement and speech, unknown to former generations. All these changes have taken place in one century. Whoever wishes to appreciate their effects should first look at the healthy, happy crowds at a modern sea-side resort, and then study W. P. Frith's picture 'Ramsgate Sands' painted in the middle of the last century. Observe the voluminous dresses of the ladies, the enormous sunshades carefully protecting their over-clad bodies from the rays of the sun and one overdressed little girl, paddling.





PART OF W. P. FRITH'S PICTURE *Ramsgate Sands*

By gracious permission of His Majesty the King

- Education The education of the people has made great strides since the first popular Education Act of 1870. Much, however, remains to be done before all British children are receiving a good education in decent buildings, with adequate provision for playing-fields. Further, the students in universities in Great Britain only number 50,000 at present—a far smaller proportion than in most European countries. But there are, besides actual schools and colleges, three great popular educators (two of which are the product of the twentieth century)—the wireless, the cinema, and
- The BBC the newspaper. Broadcasting, under the direction of the BBC, has avoided the pitfalls into which the other two have fallen: it is not dependent on advertisements, and not exploited by irresponsible individuals. It is, on the contrary, a carefully administered company, whose charter depends on a Government grant.
- The Cinema The cinema suffers somewhat by comparison; though some film stories are excellent, many are merely silly or sensational. Yet, properly controlled, the cinema has a great future. Technically it has improved beyond all recognition since the days (c. 1900-10) when the 'animated pictures' showed figures moving through what were apparently clouds of coal-dust.
- Modern Journalism The popular newspaper, with its millions of readers, dates from the end of Queen Victoria's reign. It was in 1880 that the branch manager of a fancy-goods business, named George Newnes, started a weekly publication called *Tit-Bits*, which was intended to appeal to a public more numerous than intelligent. Alfred Harmsworth (afterwards Lord Northcliffe), who entered Newnes's office at the age of twenty, later began a paper on the same lines, called *Answers*. It was in 1896 that Harmsworth launched the *Daily Mail*, the forerunner of all the popular newspapers of the twentieth century.
- The new journalism depended mainly on advertisements, for business firms would pay large sums to papers with a million circulation. But the sense of responsibility which had distinguished the older type of journalism was often lacking. The situation has been well described by a modern writer: 'To this new public of the streets and the tramcars it is useless to appeal in terms of reason; it has not time to put the two ends of an argument together; it has hardly patience to receive a single idea, much less to hold two in the mind and compare

them.<sup>1</sup> Further, the habit of presenting propaganda in the form of news is perhaps the most sinister innovation in journalism in modern times.

The literature of this half-century was a reflection of the tremendous changes of that eventful time. One of the foremost novelists was Thomas Hardy, whose somewhat bitter outlook was relieved by his wonderful feeling for his native Wessex—for example, in *The Return of the Native* and *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*. A very different writer was Robert Louis Stevenson, whose polished yet clear prose makes his books a delight to read, whether in imaginative tales like *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* or in tales of adventure like *Treasure Island*.

In imaginative literature the work of H. G. Wells takes a high place. His early stories, such as *The Time Machine* or *The Invisible Man*, owe much to his scientific training; but his best novels, such as *Kipps* and *Tono-Bungay* are crammed with observation of contemporary life and full of scathing criticism of our social system. Wells peers into the future with uncanny vision: he is a dreamer of modern Utopias, of the 'shape of things to come'. Arnold Bennett also described the social scene: his novels give a faithful if unheroic picture of life in 'the Five Towns' of the Potteries. Joseph Conrad, a Pole educated in France, found in English a language which fascinated him, and in English seafaring life a subject which he made fascinating to his readers. John Galsworthy, playwright and novelist, was a man filled with a passionate hatred of cruelty, as his plays bear witness. His greatest work, the *Forsyte Saga*, is not only a fine novel, but an historical record of considerable value. Beginning in the eighties, and going down to the year 1926, it presents an unforgettable picture of three generations of the comfortable, middle-class Englishman.

Up to the end of the Victorian era the theatre was under the influence of actor-managers, Henry Irving, Beerbohm Tree, and others, whose productions of Shakespeare, though magnificent, buried the essential beauty of the verse under a heavy weight of scenery and costume. It was largely due to Harley Granville Barker (from 1904) that this tradition was broken and Shakespeare performed, practically uncut, in front of simple

<sup>1</sup> J. L. Hobson, *Psychology of Jingoism* (1901).

scenery. This revolution in the theatre itself was accompanied by a dramatic revival, of which the chief figure was George Bernard Shaw. Shaw aimed his shafts of wit at the prosperous self-satisfied Victorian world; his theories about family life, State, education, marriage, and every topic under the sun, are to be read in his Prefaces as well as the plays themselves. The strange genius of Sir James Barrie gave to the modern stage some of its favourite plays, e.g. *Peter Pan* and *Dear Brutus*, where sheer fantasy becomes as convincing as realism.

**Poetry** The most widely read poet of the 'nineties was Rudyard Kipling, whose vigorous verse (e.g. *Barrack-Room Ballads*) spoke of the rough joys of a soldier's life and of the glamour and adventure of countries overseas. The new century saw the rise of the so-called Georgian poets, such as Rupert Brooke. James Elroy Flecker, John Masefield, and Walter de la Mare. Hardy, the novelist, was also a considerable poet (*The Dynast* written in play form, is the longest poetical work of modern times), as was Robert Bridges, Masefield's predecessor as Poet Laureate. A. E. Housman's *A Shropshire Lad*, modelled on the old ballad tradition, combines great beauty of language with an individual melancholy. In an entirely different but equally individual tradition, W. B. Yeats, the leader of a group of Irish poets, won during the last years of the nineteenth century the reputation which he has since maintained. In post-War years, the romantic poetry of such writers as Rupert Brooke has been partly overshadowed by a revolt against conventional styles; of this movement the work of T. S. Eliot may be taken as typical. The more traditional voice of English poetry speaks in *A Shropshire Lad*, in the sonnets of Brooke and Robert Bridges, and in the verses of Flecker:

I care not if you bridge the seas,  
Or ride secure the cruel sky,  
Or build consummate palaces  
Of metal or of masonry.  
But have you wine and music still,  
And statues and a bright-eyed love,  
And foolish thoughts of good and ill,  
And prayers to them who sit above?<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *To a Poet a Thousand Years Hence*. By James Elroy Flecker.

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